ANNIVERSARY SPOTLIGHT®

The Ultimate Guide to MANGA & ANIME

CLASSIC CHARACTERS

FIRST LOOK AT NEW RELEASES

ALL THE COMIC BOOKS, TV SHOWS, MOVIES, VIDEO GAMES & MORE!

FAVORITE FRANCHISES

+ Visionary Artists You Need to Know

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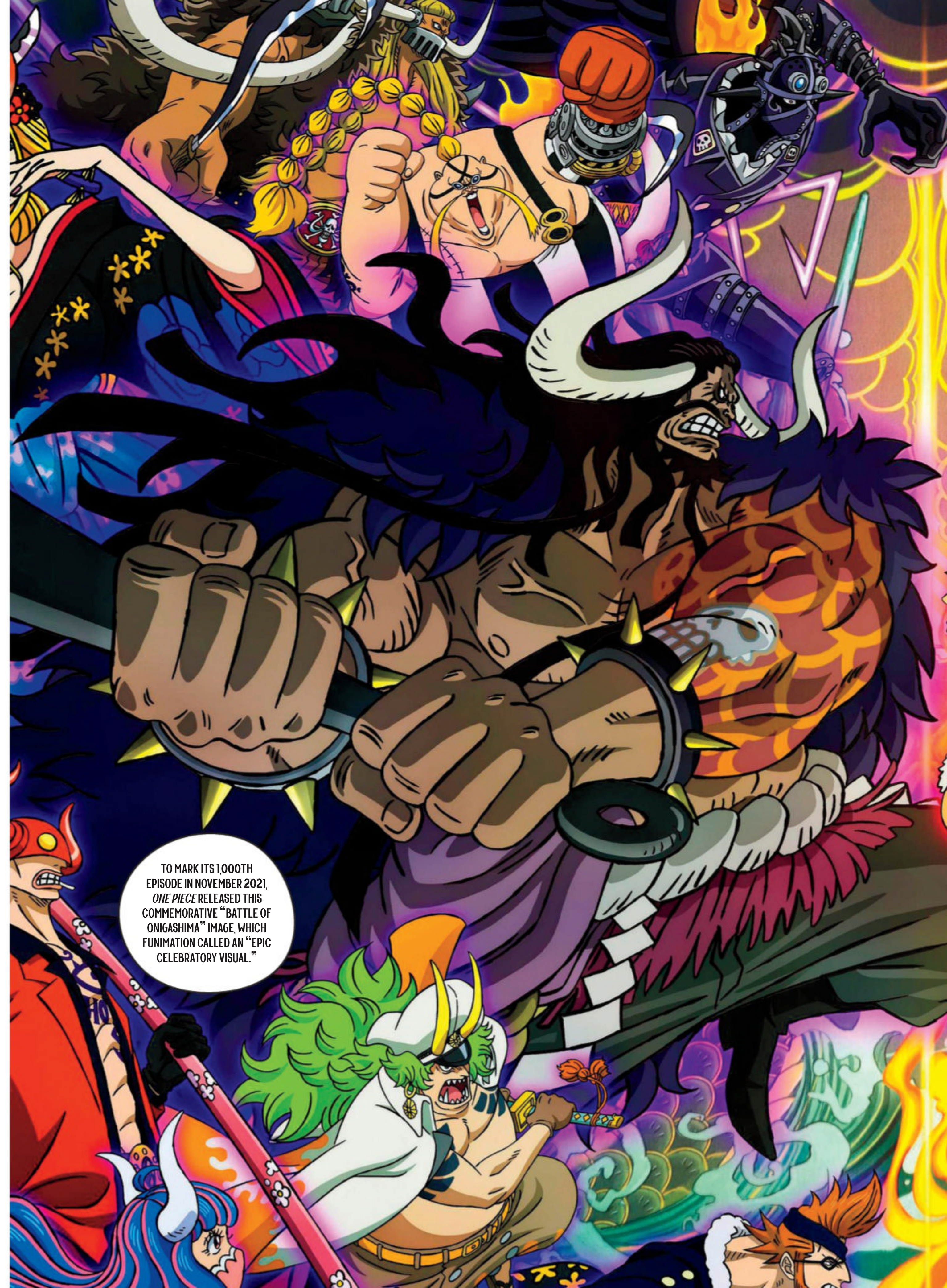
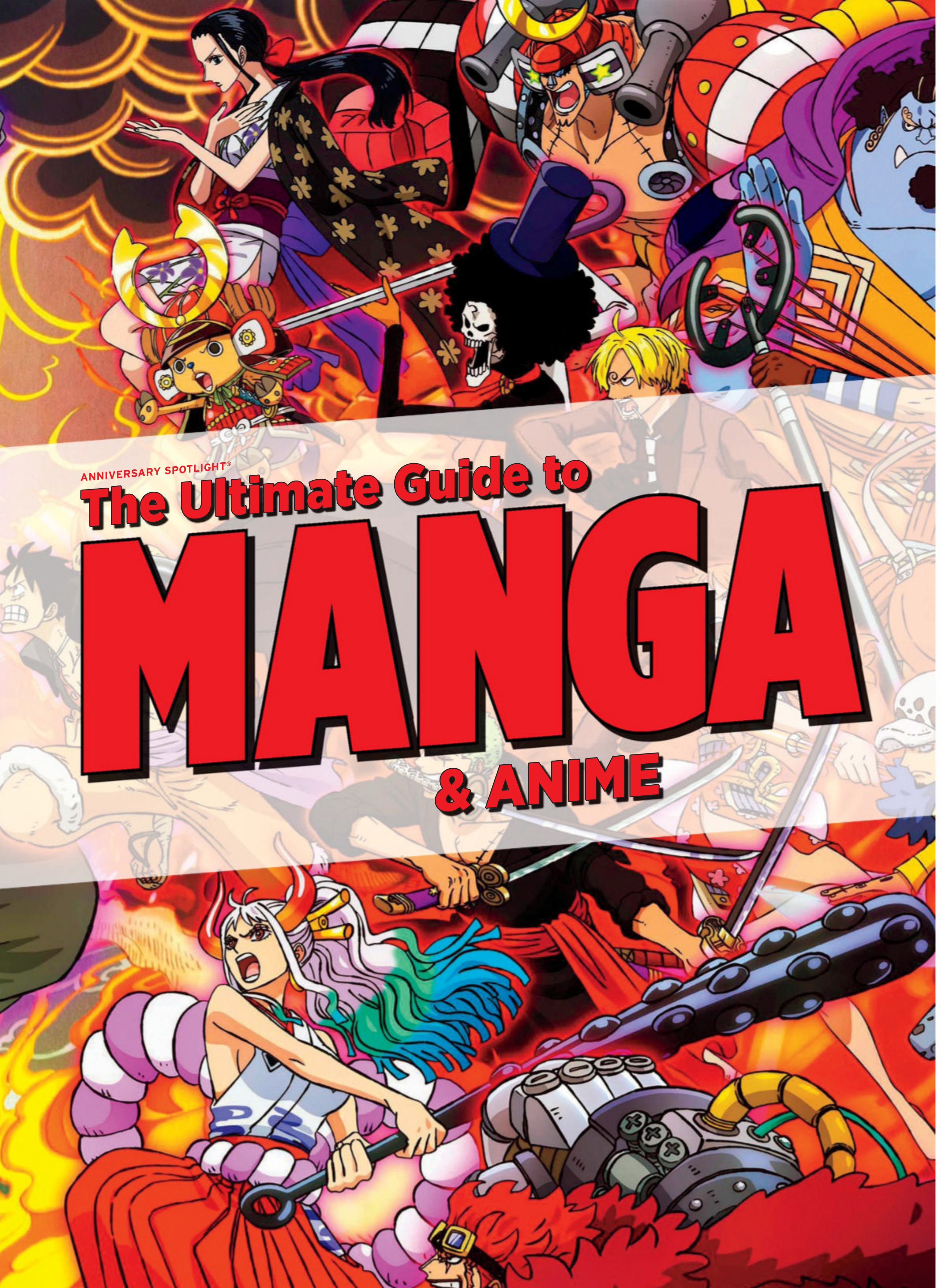


TO MARK ITS 1,000TH EPISODE IN NOVEMBER 2021, *ONE PIECE* RELEASED THIS COMMEMORATIVE "BATTLE OF ONIGASHIMA" IMAGE, WHICH FUNIMATION CALLED AN "EPIC CELEBRATORY VISUAL."



ANNIVERSARY SPOTLIGHT®

The Ultimate Guide to MANGA & ANIME

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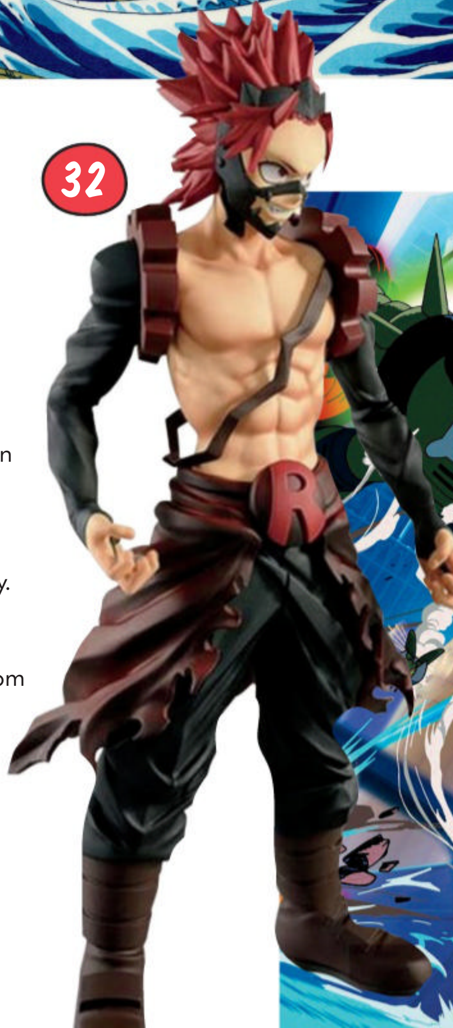

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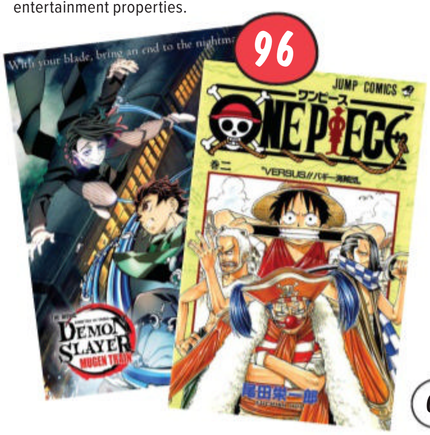

96

YUKI SETSUNA
EMMA VERDE
TENNOJI RINA

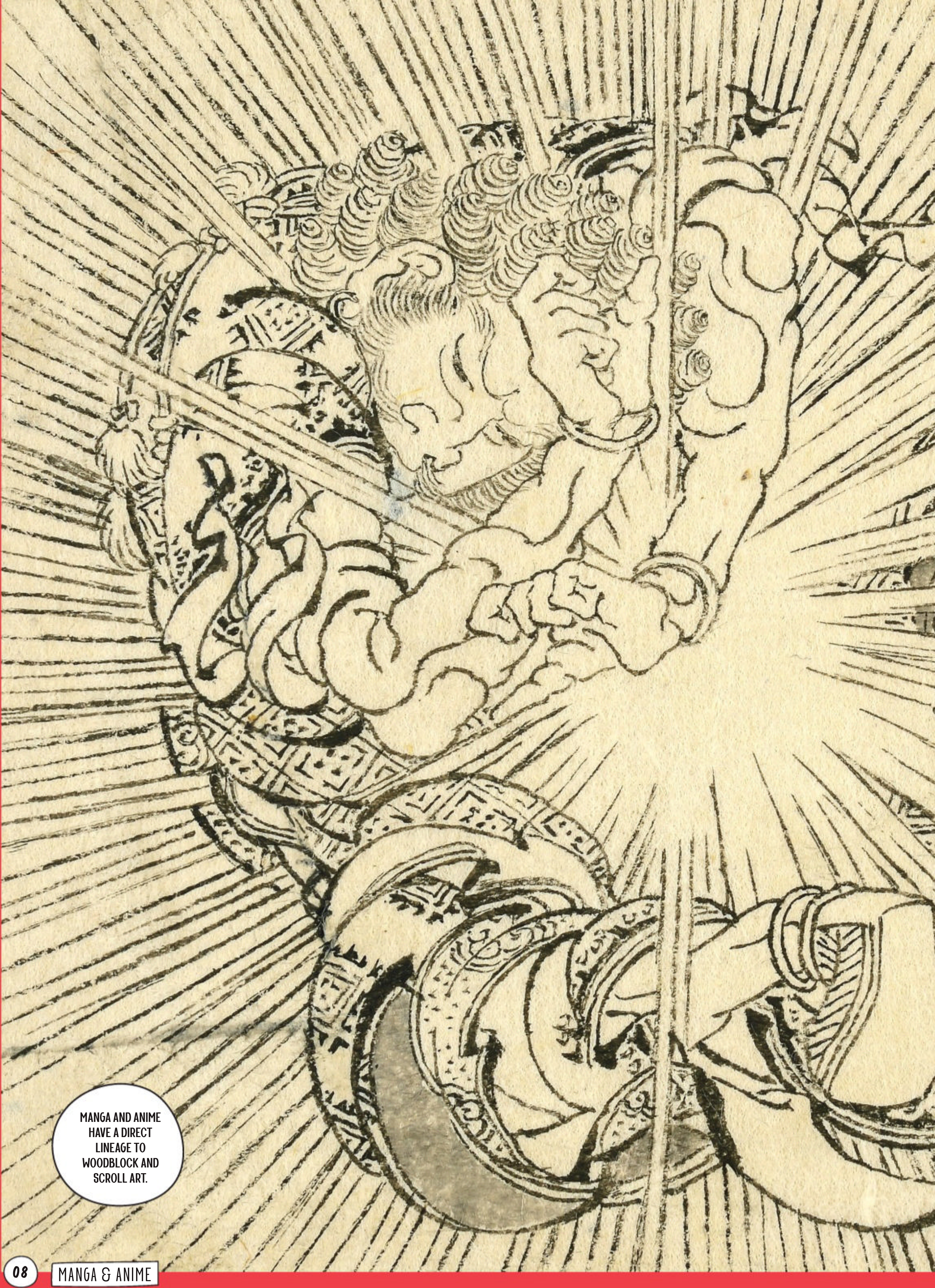
MORE THAN JUST ‘JAPANESE CARTOONS’

Dive into the fascinating world of manga and anime.

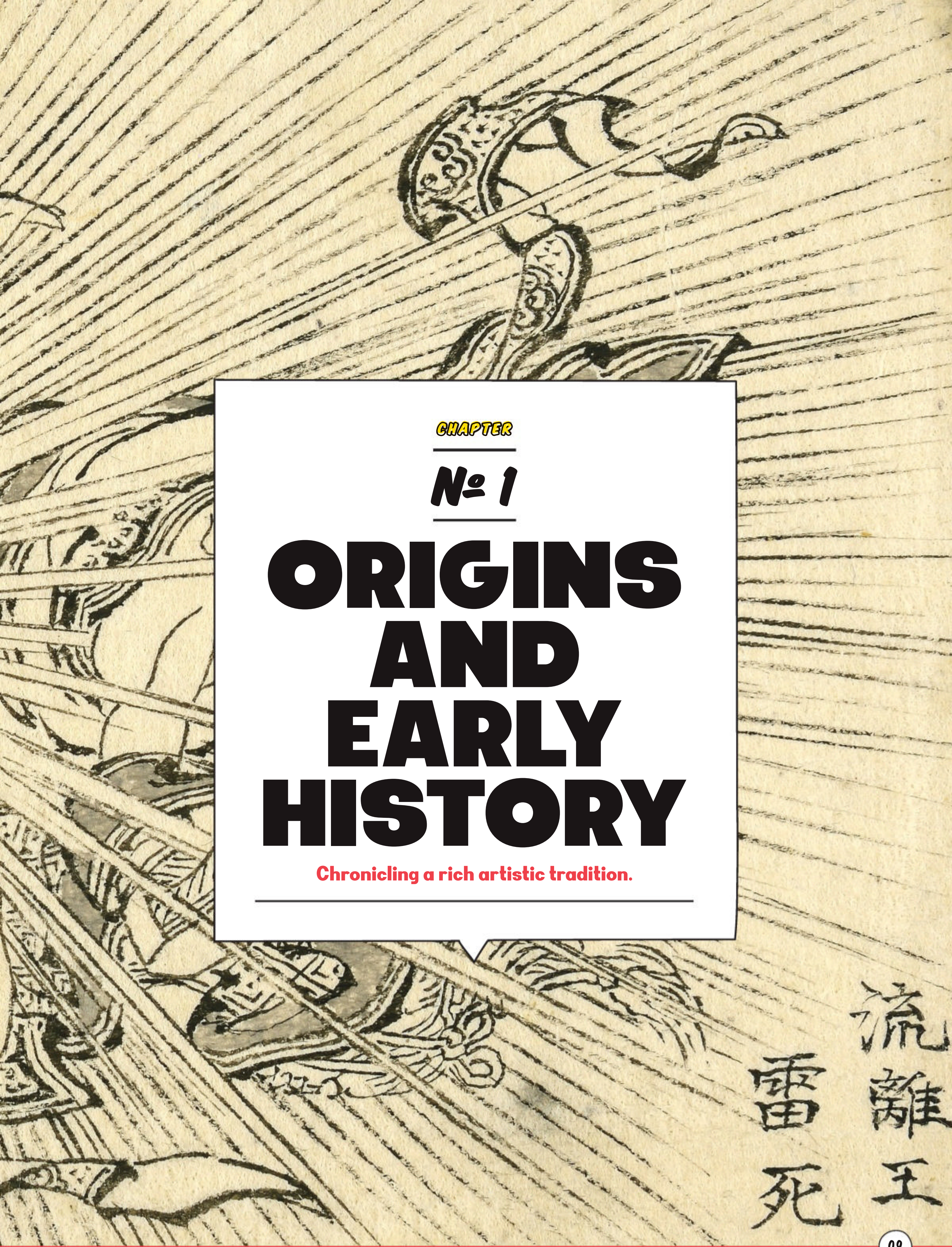
IF YOU’VE BEEN TO A BOOKSTORE IN the last 10 years, you’ve probably seen reams of small-sized, black and white comics with Japanese names such as *Naruto* and *Jujutsu Kaisen* lining shelves. And if you’ve spent any time scrolling through Netflix’s offerings, you’ve likely seen similar, hand-drawn animated series splash across your screen.

Manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese-style animation) are two of the biggest entertainment exports in the world, right up there with new iterations of *Star Wars* and the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Largely defined by a particular art style and production format, both mediums share a deep and rich history going back hundreds of years. Influenced by everything from World War II to Walt Disney, these two art forms now dominate the bestsellers list and box office alike.

How did an artistic style that shares origins with traditional Japanese woodblock printing become the entertainment titan it is today? In these pages, we’ll explain just that. Starting with manga’s origins in Japanese art and history, you’ll explore early manga and anime, and learn about manga pioneers such as Osamu Tezuka. We’ll also dissect the biggest series out today, including franchises such as *One Piece*, *Demon Slayer*, *Jujutsu Kaisen* and *Spy x Family*. With this primer on everything manga and anime, you’ll be able to understand and appreciate the amazing mediums like never before!



MANGA AND ANIME HAVE A DIRECT LINEAGE TO WOODBLOCK AND SCROLL ART.



CHAPTER

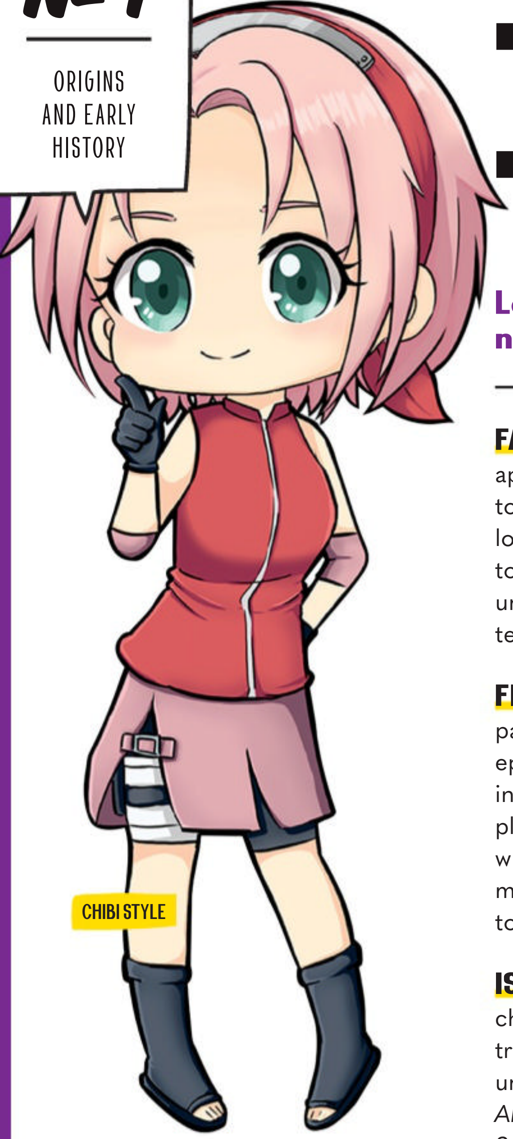
№ 1

ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY

Chronicling a rich artistic tradition.

TERMS TO KNOW

Learning these key words and phrases will help you navigate this colorful and exciting world.



CHIBI STYLE

ANIME Anime itself is tricky to explain. Merriam-Webster defines it as "a style of animation originating in Japan…characterized by stark colorful graphics depicting vibrant characters…" While some die-hard fans will proclaim that only animation produced in Japan qualifies as anime, most audiences focus on the style of animation rather than where it was made when categorizing a piece of art as anime.

CHIBI A drawing style in which characters are drawn smaller and with less detail than usual, usually to depict humor or cuteness.

FAN SERVICE Using sex, sex appeal or overtly sexual situations to entice an audience, especially longtime fans. Utilizing adult themes to appeal to an audience is not unique to manga and anime, but the term "fan service" is.

FILLER Similar in concept to padding or fluff, filler refers to episodes or entire plotlines that are inconsequential to the overall plot of a series. Filler often occurs when an anime series based on a manga runs out of source material to work off of.

ISEKAI A genre where the main character or characters are transported to another world unlike our own. Examples include *Alice in Wonderland*, *Tron* and *Sword Art Online*.

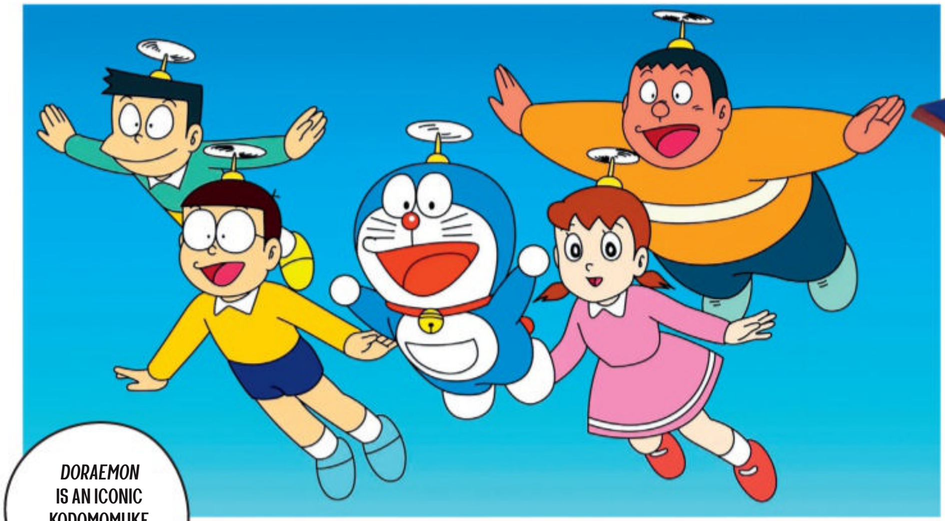
JOSEI This genre is marketed toward adult women, and usually centers around drama or romance. Examples include *Paradise Kiss*, *Nana* and *Michiko & Hatchin*.

KODOMOMUKE From the Japanese word "kodomo," kodomomuke is a genre meaning "for children." Many Studio Ghibli films, such as *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Spirited Away*, fall into this category.

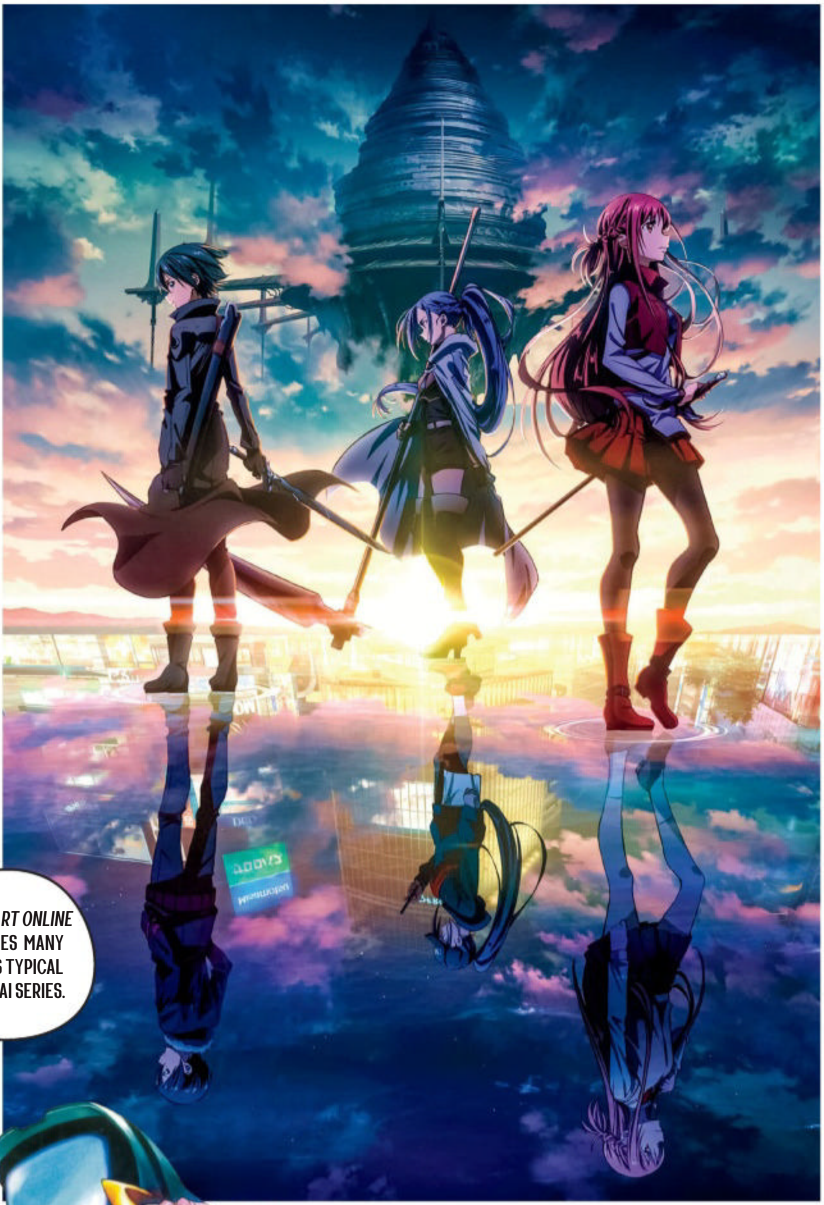
MANGA A Japanese comic book or graphic novel, typically drawn in black and white. Manga comes from two Japanese characters: "man" meaning "whimsical" and "ga" meaning "pictures."

BLEACH

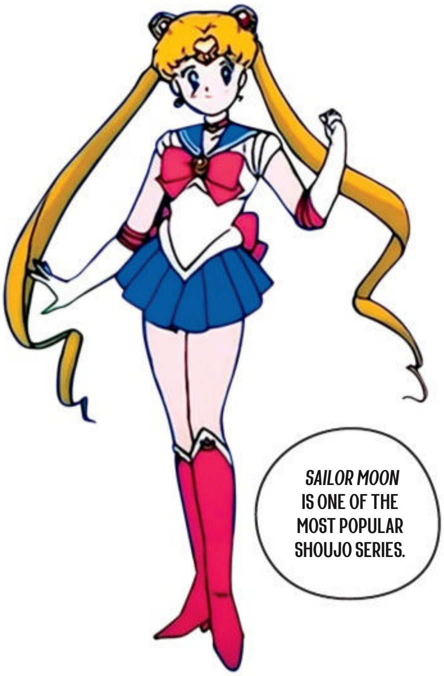
BLEACH
Tite Kubo
1



DORAEMON IS AN ICONIC KODOMOMUKE FRANCHISE.



SWORD ART ONLINE FEATURES MANY TROPES TYPICAL TO ISEKAI SERIES.



SAILOR MOON IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SHOUJO SERIES.

FLCL

MANGAKA A person who creates manga, usually for a living. Unlike most Western comic creators, most mangaka are the sole writers and illustrators of their work.

OVA Meaning "original video animation," an OVA is an animated work that was created for first release online or on disc instead of the usual TV debut. OVA (such as *FLCL*) are usually unburdened by TV network schedules or content restrictions, leading to more adult-oriented content.

SEINEN A genre aimed and marketed toward adult men that can encompass almost anything, from fantasy to political thriller. Examples include *Berserk*, *Monster* and *Vagabond*.

SHONEN This genre is usually action and superhero-focused and is geared toward boys and young men. It's the most popular overall, and the primary genre of the famed *Shonen Jump* magazine.

SHOUJO These manga are marketed toward girls and young women and can be centered on action, romance, comedy and more. Examples include *Sailor Moon*, *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Kaguya-Sama: Love Is War*.

ORANGE

VOLUME A book in a manga series, usually over 100 pages long. Volumes are numbered, like novels in a series.

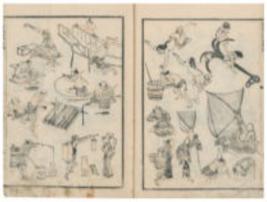
WEEB Usually used in a negative way, a weeb is a person (usually non-Japanese) who is obsessed with manga, anime and other Japanese cultural exports in a nerdy or socially awkward manner.

AN ILLUSTRATE

1798

THE TERM "MANGA" IS FIRST USED TO DESCRIBE *SHIJI NO YUKIKAI*, A PICTURE BOOK BY SANTŌ KYŌDEN.

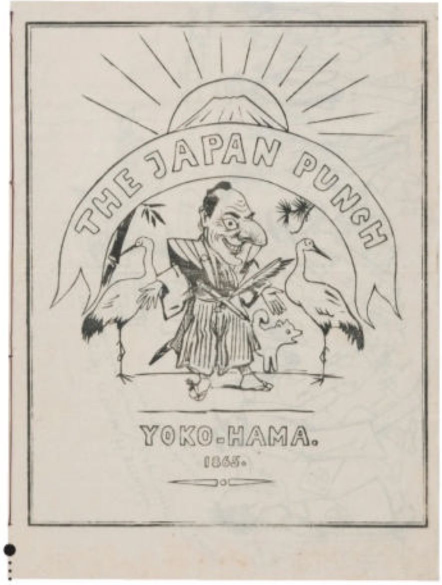
1830



Hokusai Manga advanced the art form by using illustrated panels.

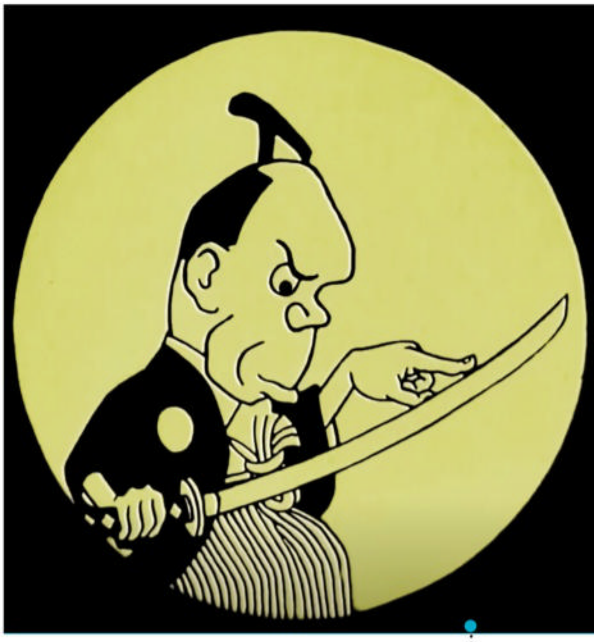
1854

Japan opens its borders and is inundated with art and comics from all over the globe.



1862

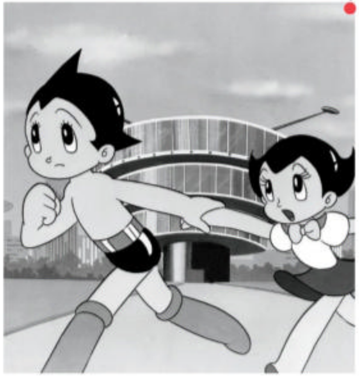
English cartoonist Charles Wirgman publishes *The Japan Punch* in Japan, blending Japanese and European formats.



1917

Early Japanese animation pioneer Jun'ichi Kōuchi releases *The Dull Sword*.

1952



Osamu Tezuka creates the global sensation *Astro Boy*.

D HISTORY

Follow the line that traces key events of the anime and manga mediums.

1956

Toei Animation, a future titan of the anime industry, is founded.

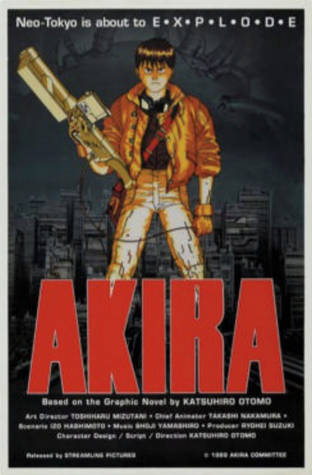
1985

スタジオジブリ作品
STUDIO GHIBLI

HAYAO MIYAZAKI, ISAO TAKAHATA AND TOSHIO SUZUKI START STUDIO GHIBLI.

1988

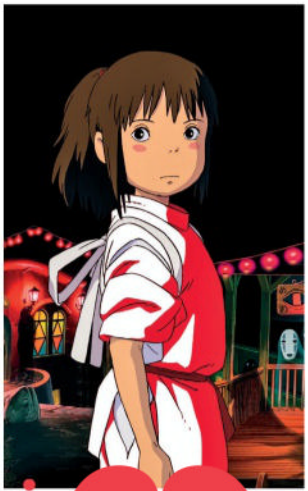
Akira premiers in Japan, then worldwide a year later.


Neo-Tokyo is about to E•X•P•L•O•D•E
AKIRA
Based on the Graphic Novel by KATSUHIRO OTOMO
Art Director TOSHIHARU MIZUTANI • Chief Animator TAKASHI NAKAMURA •
Scenario IZO HASHIMOTO • Music SHOJI YAMASHIRO • Producer RYOHEI SUZUKI
Character Design / Script / Direction KATSUHIRO OTOMO
Released by STREAMLINE PICTURES
© 1988 AKIRA COMMITTEE

TOONAMI

A Toonami block of hit anime starts airing on the Cartoon Network in North America.

1999

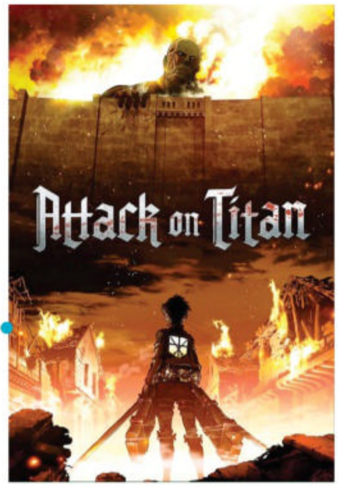


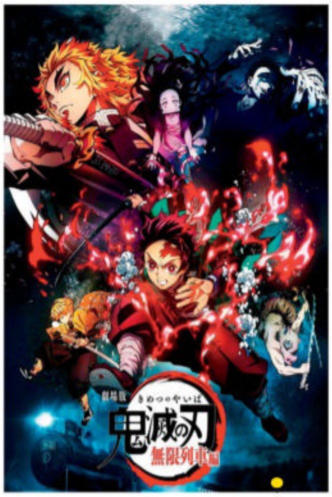
2003

Spirited Away wins Best Animated Feature at the 75th Academy Awards.

2013

Attack on Titan becomes an international megahit streaming online.

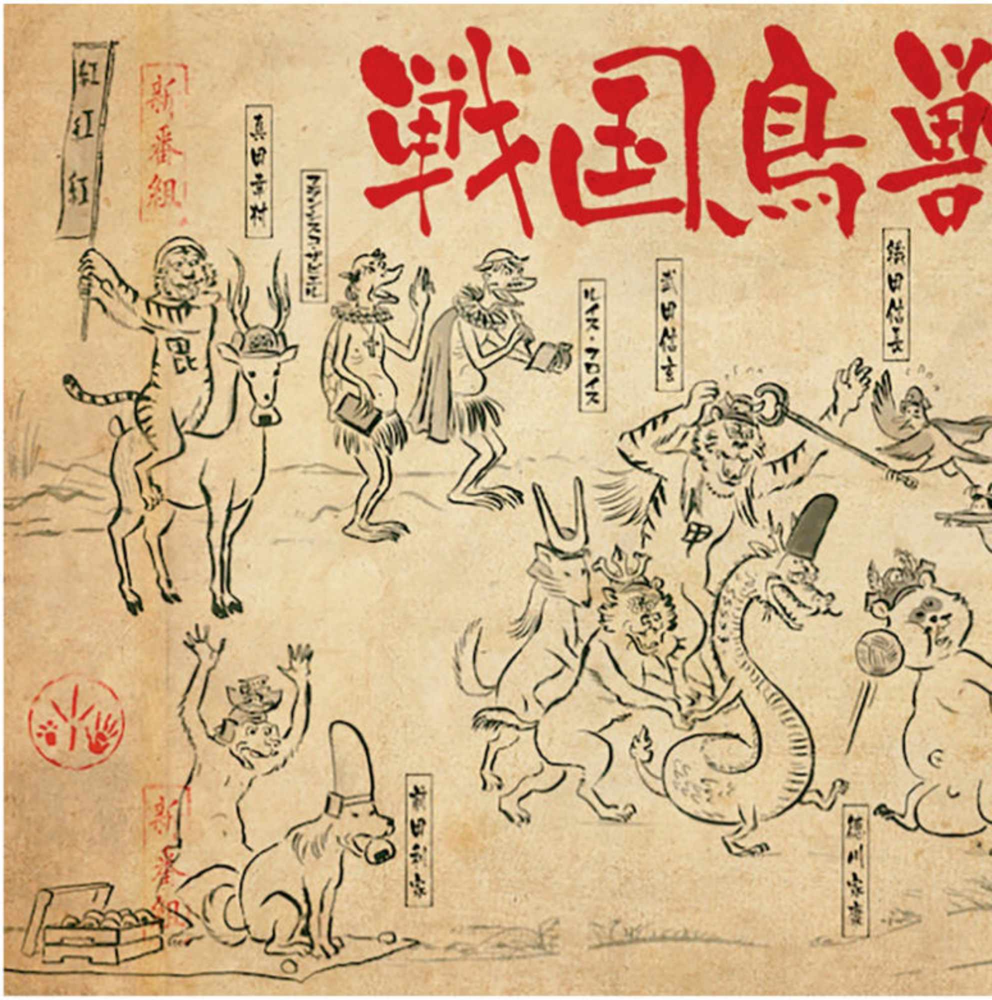

Attack on Titan


劇場版
鬼滅の刃
無限列車編

Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train becomes one of the highest grossing films of the year.

2020

THE DAWN OF MANGA


戦国鳥
織田信長
徳川家康
武田信玄
ルイス・フロイス
前田利家
フランシスコ・ザビエル
真田幸村
新番組
新番組
紅
紅
紅
毘

An age-old art evolves into an exciting modern genre.

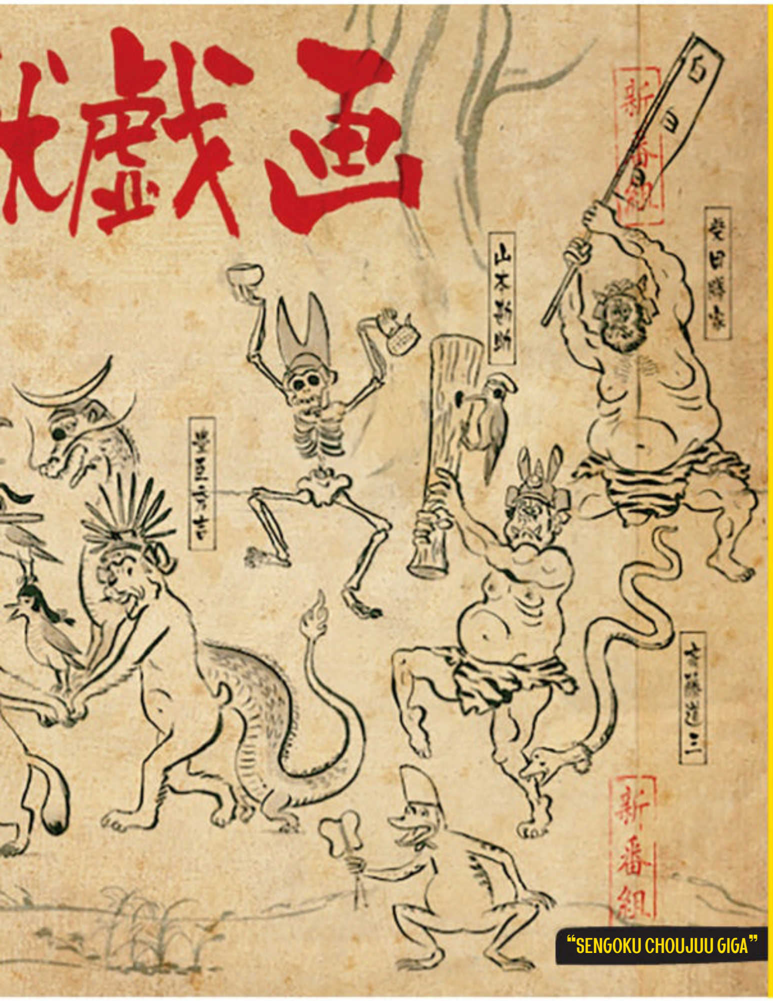
BY NOAH PETRILLO

THE PRESENCE OF MANGA IN POPULAR culture, especially in America, might feel relatively new. This often leads to the belief that manga itself came from a sort of offshoot of comic books in the 1930s. While American comics did play a role in the evolution of some manga styles, especially during the 1940s and 1950s, the origins of manga come from Japan's own history of illustrated storytelling.

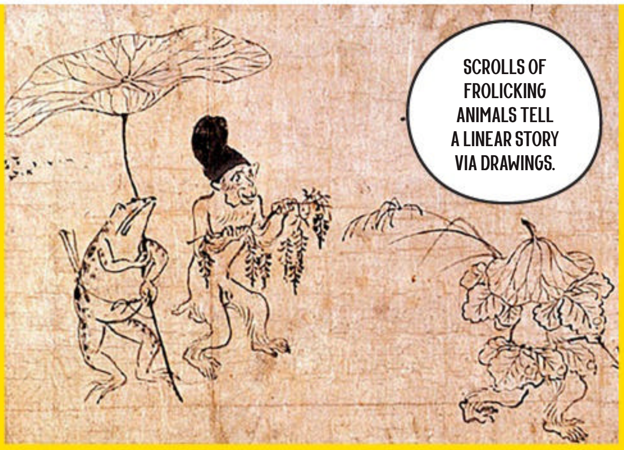
One of Japan's earliest forms of illustrated stories is called emaki or emakimono, which featured horizontal illustrations on scrolls that combined calligraphy with a distinct illustration style. The scrolls were sometimes up to dozens of feet long. Some of the earliest examples of emaki were created in the Nara period (710-794).

One of the most famous examples of emaki, called *The Illustrated Tale of Genji*, came a few hundred years later, around the 12th century. Written and illustrated by Murasaki Shikibu, it's considered by many to be among the first novels ever written. The story follows Minamoto, an emperor's son, who after being removed from the line of rule falls in love and attempts to become an imperial officer. The story also showcases many of the customs of the aristocratic lifestyles of the Heian period (794-1185).

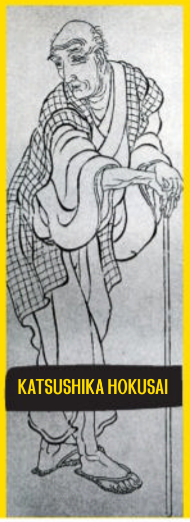
Around the same time in the 12th century, the famous "Scrolls



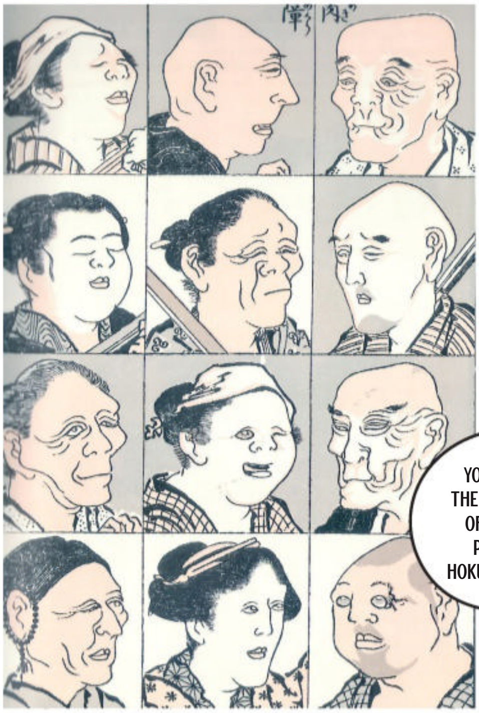
"SENGOKU CHOUJUU GIGA"



SCROLLS OF FROLICKING ANIMALS TELL A LINEAR STORY VIA DRAWINGS.



KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI



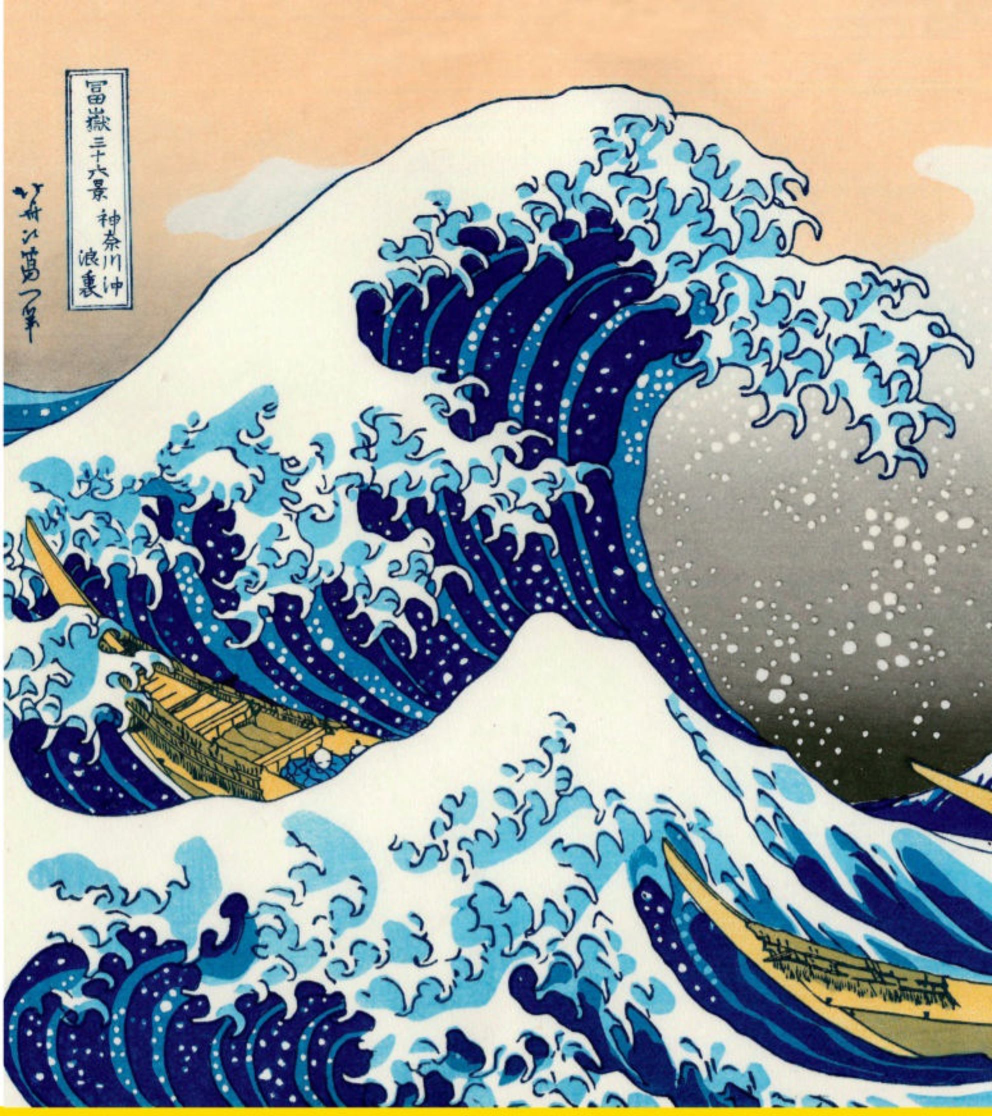
YOU CAN SEE THE BEGINNINGS OF DISTINCT PANELS IN HOKUSAI'S WORK.

of Frolicking Animals and Humans" were illustrated by Toba Sōjō. The four-scroll set, called Chōjū-giga in Japanese, features dancing frogs, a rabbit chasing a monkey-thief with a stick and humans playing tug-of-war with a string around their necks. Today, the scrolls are stored in the Buddhist Kōzan-ji temple near Kyoto. Scrolls like the Chōjū-giga were often meant to decorate the interiors of Buddhist temples and sculptures, according to the facsimile supplier Facsimile Finder.

Many of these 12th century illustrations contained moral lessons or even societal critiques as part of countercultural artistic movements. But they also laid the groundwork for techniques still seen in manga today. In an editorial on the history of manga, the art magazine *Widewalls* points out the novel technique of lines drawn around the legs to simulate running—a technique modern manga artists still use today.

The term manga was used for the first time in 1798 to describe a book of illustrations by Santō Kyōden titled *Shiji No Yukikai* (*Four Seasons*). In Japanese, manga is the combination of two characters: "man" meaning "whimsical" and "ga" meaning "pictures." The term is an even older one than an English word like "comic," to which manga is usually compared. The manga style stretches much further back, and refers to a wide range of illustration forms throughout Japanese history.

Another famous type of Japanese art that was, at one time or another, referred to as manga was "ukiyo-e," a form that existed from the 17th through the 19th century. Perhaps the most famous artist of this period was Katsushika Hokusai. According to Katsushikahokusai.org, Hokusai was, in his time, "Japan's leading expert on Chinese painting." His most famous series was called "Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji," which he completed in 1831. Today, The Art Institute of Chicago calls it "a tour-de-force series." The most famous part of it, and perhaps one of the most iconic pieces of art ever known, is "The Great Wave." Originally titled "Under the Wave

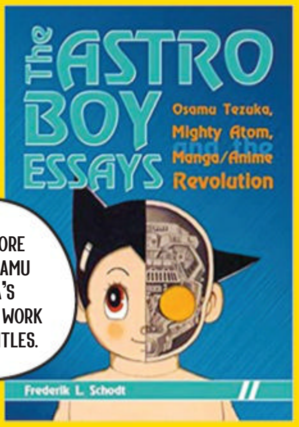

冨嶽三十六景
神奈川沖浪裏
北斎改為一筆

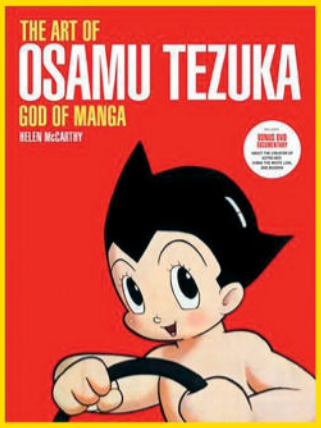
off Kanagawa," this image of huge waves rocking a group of rowboats with Mount Fuji in the background has defined the ukiyo-e movement since its creation. Another famous artist in the Edo period (1615-1868) by the name of Utagawa Hiroshige painted a well-known image in a similar style titled "Hakone; Kosui."

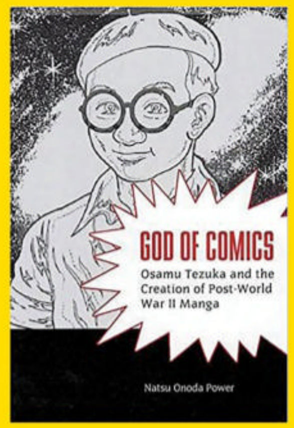
Another collection of Hokusai's works, known most simply as *Hokusai Manga*, is widely considered the first solid example of manga as we know it today. Throughout this collection, Hokusai's illustrations came in the form of illustrated panels that simulate movement through space and time.

Near the very end of the Edo period, Charles Wirgman, an English cartoonist, created "the first European-language periodical published in Japan," according to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The publication was called *The Japan Punch*, and featured satirical comics that were a blend of Japanese and European drawing styles. *The Japan Punch* released issues from 1862-1887. Wirgman lived in Yokohama, Japan, and wanted to create something for other foreigners who lived in the country at the time. While in hindsight, some of the caricatured depictions of the Japanese characters may be insensitive, the publication did play an important role in combining traditional Japanese illustration styles with the more modern, European comic formats.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OSAMU TEZUKA'S IMPRESSIVE WORK IN THESE TITLES.

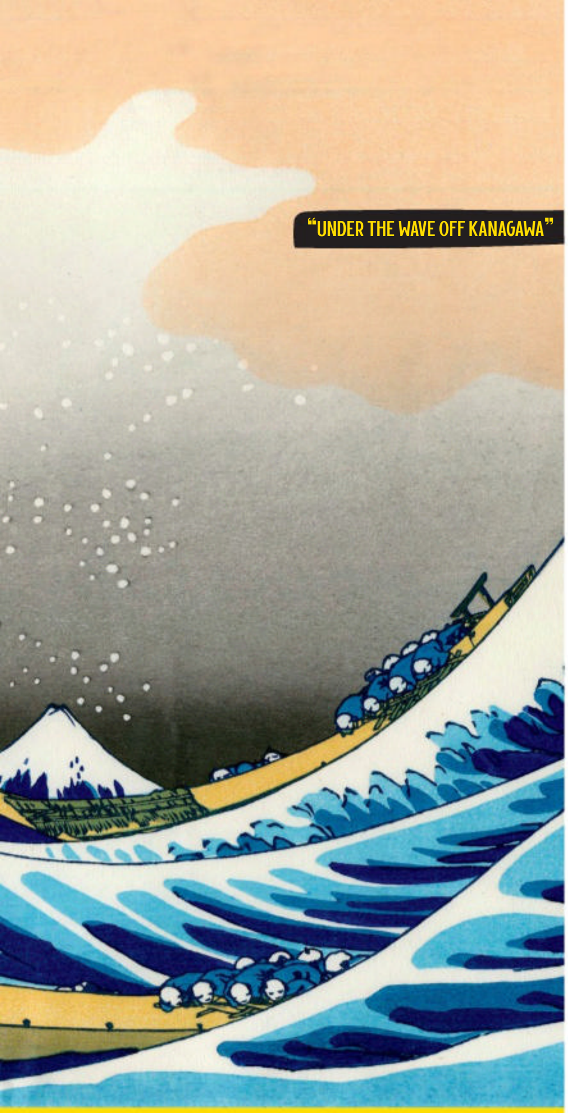


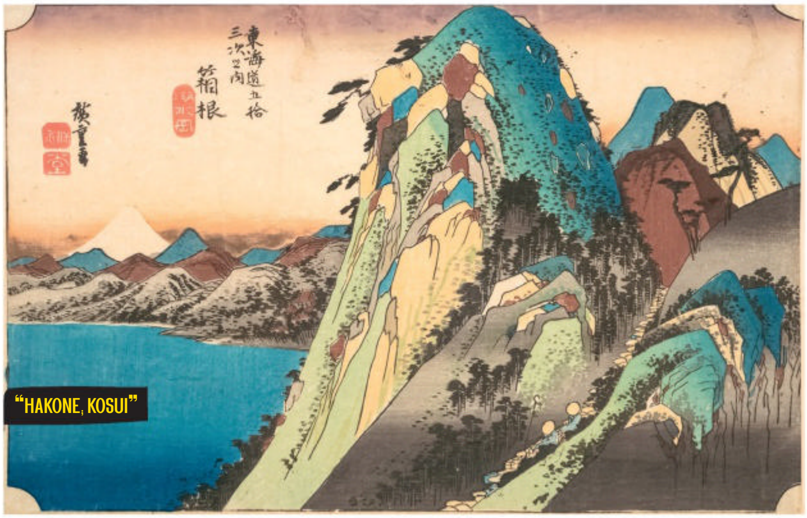




Manga as we know it today truly started to emerge after World War II, during and soon after the time of American occupation in Japan (1945-1952). The evolution in the overarching style of manga can arguably be attributed to just one man, Osamu Tezuka, nicknamed the "Godfather of Manga." His love of both Chinese traditional art styles as well as the early Disney films created a perfect combination of global influence that made the Japanese manga style both charmingly recognizable and incredibly unique. Tezuka lit a fire under the art form of manga that led to the popularization and globalization of both manga and its animated extension: anime.

The woodblock and scroll foundations of manga have carried through from the 700s to the 2020s. The modern manga and anime market has been rapidly expanding since the 1980s, and is showing no signs of slowing down any time soon.


"UNDER THE WAVE OFF KANAGAWA"



"HAKONE, KOSUI"

This period can largely be traced back to Tezuka. Today, the artist's reach and influence over modern manga is difficult to overstate. "'Prolific' does not even start to describe the sheer volume or breadth of Tezuka's work," author Natsu Onoda Power wrote in the book *God of Comics*.

Throughout his lifetime, Tezuka published 700 volumes and more than 150,000 pages. Remarkably, Tezuka published one of his first manga, *Shin Takarajima* (Japanese for "New Treasure Island"), in 1947 while he was a medical student. *New Treasure Island*, published as a rental book—a result of paper shortages—spread like wildfire, marking the beginning of a prolific career that would last until his death.

Tezuka worked in every genre, including crime and thrillers, science fiction, documentaries, Westerns, romance, mystery manga, martial arts and ancient legend manga. His most famous creation is *Atom Boy* (known as *Astro Boy* internationally), one of the most well-known and bestselling manga in the world. *Astro Boy* is a story about a robot created to console a man grieving for his dead son. This work's legacy solidified the style of manga that is popular today.

Tezuka also founded a publication in the late 1950s to provide an outlet for emerging artists. It's hard to imagine contemporary manga without Tezuka's influence. At the same time, Tezuka was deeply inspired by earlier Japanese artists and Western cartoonists such as Walt Disney. The fact that he pulled from all these sources and created a definitive style, one so foundational to 20th century artists, speaks to the diverse array of material that shaped modern-day manga.

Today, manga is enjoyed by children and adults alike. Virtually no topic is off-limits within these pages. Manga is an art form, a vehicle for cultural expression and the product of centuries of artistic progress. When the Japanese government created a campaign to promote the country's cultural influence in 2013, it's no surprise that manga was a central focus.

FUN FACTS & FIGURES

SALES SPIKE OF MANGA IN NORTH AMERICA FROM 2020 TO 2021

171%

TOTAL COPIES SOLD OF *JUJUTSU KAISEN*, 2022'S TOP-SELLING MANGA SERIES

12,282,260

FASTEST GROWING MANGA SERIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Attack on Titan

PERCENTAGE OF NETFLIX'S GLOBAL AUDIENCE THAT WATCHED ANIME IN THE LAST YEAR

over 50%

COMBINED NUMBER OF ANIME TITLES ADDED TO NETFLIX IN 2021 AND 2022

80

EXPECTED ANNUAL ANIME AND MANGA GROWTH RATE FOR 2022 TO 2030

9.7%

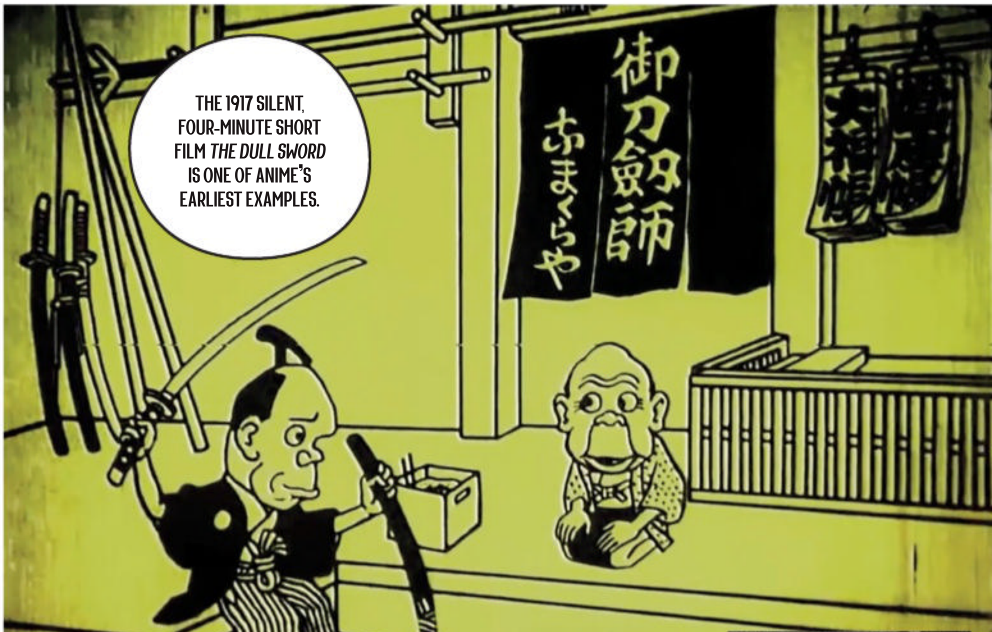
FASTEST GROWING ANIME MARKET REGION

the Middle East and Africa (MEA)

MAKE WAY FOR ANIME

Decades of rich history helped to craft the graphics style that audiences know and love today.

BY GABRIELLA FRISCH



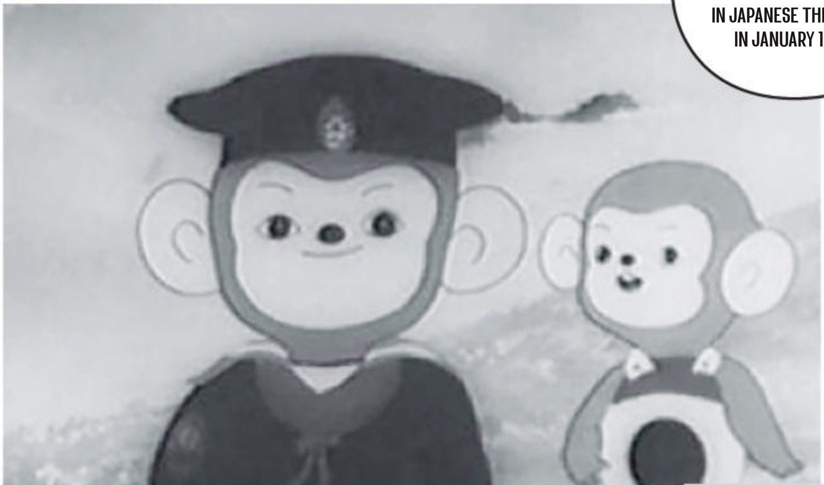
THE 1917 SILENT, FOUR-MINUTE SHORT FILM *THE DULL SWORD* IS ONE OF ANIME'S EARLIEST EXAMPLES.

JUN'ICHI KŌUCHI

THE ANIMATED DARK FANTASY FILM *Jujutsu Kaisen 0* made its statewide debut in March of 2022. After a successful run in Japan, during which the film earned $23.5 million in its first three days and became the highest-earning film in the Japanese market for 2021, *Jujutsu Kaisen 0* was well received by U.S. audiences, opening second at the box office behind *The Batman*.

Anime has experienced a recent surge in popularity in the West largely due to the medium's increased availability on streaming services and growing social media presence. But anime is not a new medium, and can be traced all the way back to the beginning of the 20th century.

According to Reuters reporter Linda Sieg, U.S. and European cartoons were first introduced to Japan in 1914, around the start of World War I. These cartoons especially inspired Japanese creators such as Jun'ichi Kōuchi, Seitaro Kitayama and Ōten Shimokawa. Considered the "fathers of anime," they contributed to the first anime short films, including titles such as *The Story of the Concierge Mukuzo Imokawa* and *The Dull Sword*. These films feature distinctly Japanese content. *The Dull Sword*, for instance, follows a bumbling samurai who foolishly purchases a dull-edged sword.



THE STORY OF THE CONCIERGE MUKUZO IMOKAWA PREMIERED IN JAPANESE THEATERS IN JANUARY 1917.

Cathy Munroe Hotes of Nishikata Film Review remarked, “Before the discovery of these earliest works, we only had examples of anime from the 1920s-1940s, which demonstrated the influence of popular American character design.”

The Japanese government played a part in the growth of anime during the 1930s. The enforcement of cultural nationalism led to harsh censorship and the stripping of creative control from artists. World War II saw the release of the first anime feature film, *Momotarou: Umi no Shinpei*, one of many animated propaganda films commissioned by the Imperial Japanese Army.

> **“NOW EVERYTHING IS DIGITALIZED, BUT THESE EARLY ANIMATED FILMS WERE MADE ON THE SAME PRINCIPLES USED NOW.”**
>
> Yoshiro Irie, National Film Center researcher

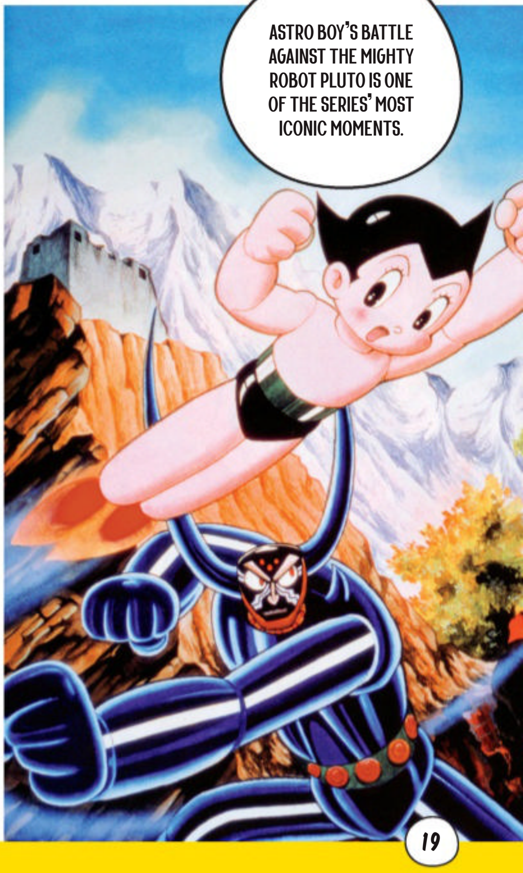
OSAMU TEZUKA

After World War II and throughout the 1950s, anime studios started to appear across Japan. The General Headquarters of the Allied occupation brought together 100 anime artists to form the Shin Nihon Dōgasha, or New Japan Animation Company. The goal was to spread post-war policies by having the artists produce propagandized anime in praise of democracy. However, many of the artists were unwilling to cooperate, ultimately leading to the disbandment of the project.

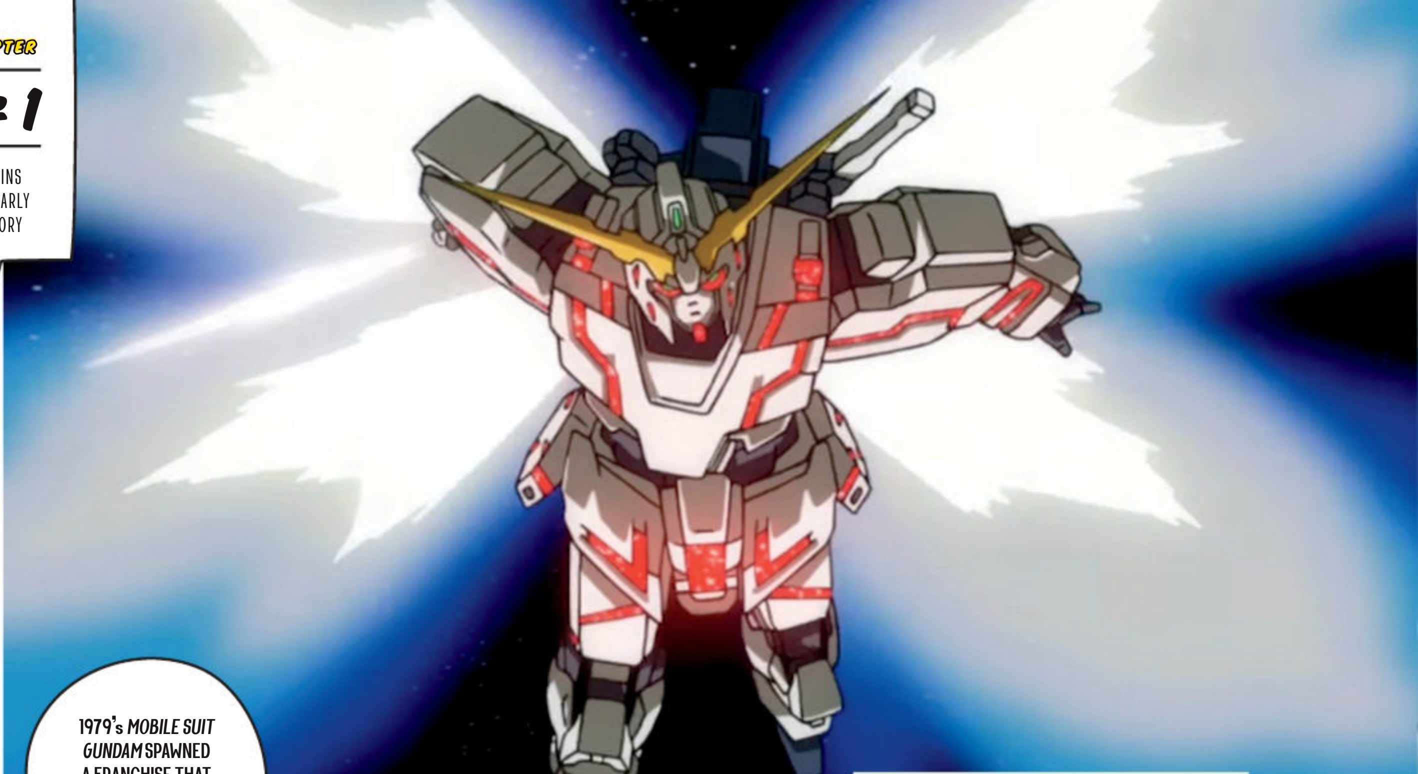
It was during these years, as Japan began to recover from the war, that Ōkawa Hiroshi, president of Toei Animation, saw Disney’s *Snow White*. He was overwhelmed by the gorgeous color of the film. In 1956, he built a modern studio with the ambition to become “the Disney of the East.” Yamaguchi Yasuo of Nippon explained, “[The studio] sent a research team to the United States and invited several experts to travel to Japan as mentors. As a result, they were able to master the Disney system of ‘assembly-line production.’” Japanese animators took Western techniques and experimented upon them using their own styles. Stylized characters with exaggerated and aesthetically pleasing facial features became popular, and is still a lasting hallmark of anime today.

Animator Osamu Tezuka established Mushi Production in 1961, after his contract with Toei Animation expired. Unlike Toei, which drew heavy inspiration from Disney, Tezuka prioritized a more singular style, embodying the aesthetic that would become characterized as anime. The studio pioneered TV animation in Japan, and was responsible for several successful TV series including *Astro Boy*. The show, which came out in 1963, was groundbreaking for being the first anime that was broadcast overseas and consumed by Western audiences, particularly Americans.

Anime developed further during the 1970s, defining distinct genres such as mecha, a subset



ASTRO BOY’S BATTLE AGAINST THE MIGHTY ROBOT PLUTO IS ONE OF THE SERIES’ MOST ICONIC MOMENTS.



1979's *MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM* SPAWNED A FRANCHISE THAT REMAINS IMMENSELY POPULAR TO THIS DAY.

of science fiction that centers on giant robots controlled by people. Early mecha shows include *Mazinger Z*, appropriately titled after the humongous super-robot of the same name featured in the show, and *Mobile Suit Gundam*, which revolves around robots used for war.

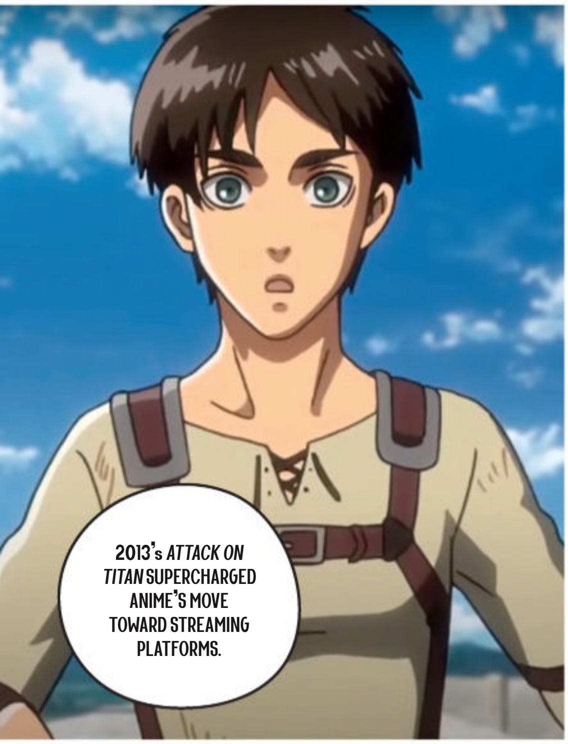
The 1980s welcomed anime into the Japanese mainstream with a boom in production thanks to mega-popular series such as *Dragon Ball* and new genres such as space opera. The 1980s also introduced original video animation (OVA), bringing anime to the home video market. Home videos made anime more accessible to domestic and international viewers. Highlights include *Night on the Galactic Railroad*, *The Tale of Genji* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, which were all pioneering films based on classic literary works in Japan. This period of expensive features and experimentation would peak with two of the most costly anime film productions of all time: *Royal Space Force: The Wings of Honneamise* and *Akira*.

One of the most controversial OVAs titles to date was 1995's *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. The OVA worked with a huge but poorly managed budget, spending most of its money on costly mecha battles at the beginning of the show's run. The intense action and beautifully drawn fight scenes sparked a revival of the declining mecha genre. *Evangelion* also led to a host of late-night experimental anime shows. Starting with *Serial Experiments Lain*, the time period became a forum for avant-garde anime such as *Boogiepop Phantom*, *Texhnolyze* and *Paranoia Agent*.

Some experimental anime films also found their footing in the 1990s, one influential example being the cyberpunk thriller *Ghost in the Shell*, which went on to influence several prominent American filmmakers including Steven Spielberg, James Cameron and the Wachowskis (Lana and Lilly). Innovative and artistic films such as *Ghost in the Shell*, alongside the boundary-pushing series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and the neo-noir space western *Cowboy Bebop* became increasingly popular among Western audiences that continued to enjoy and spread awareness of the exploits of anime.

DRAGON BALL

By 1997, anime was booming, with over 100 anime shows airing on television in Japan, including *Pokémon*, based on the video game franchise of the same name. Other 1990s anime series that gained international success were *Dragon Ball Z*, *Sailor Moon* and *Digimon*. "[*Dragon Ball Z*] spawned toy lines, video games and other related merchandise, growing into



2013's *ATTACK ON TITAN* SUPERCHARGED ANIME'S MOVE TOWARD STREAMING PLATFORMS.

a massive global phenomenon that persuaded artists and executives alike that there was a huge demand for anime among diverse groups all around the world," wrote Andrew Kincaid, for Japan Powered.

The 2000s was a time rife with the production of many serialized television shows. These anime programs were often adapted from popular Japanese literature. *Naruto*, and its sequel series, *Naruto: Shippuden*, are examples of works that made the jump from Japanese manga series to the small screen. The English dub of *Naruto* eventually aired on American children's cartoon channels, including Cartoon Network and Disney XD, exposing Western children to foreign media.

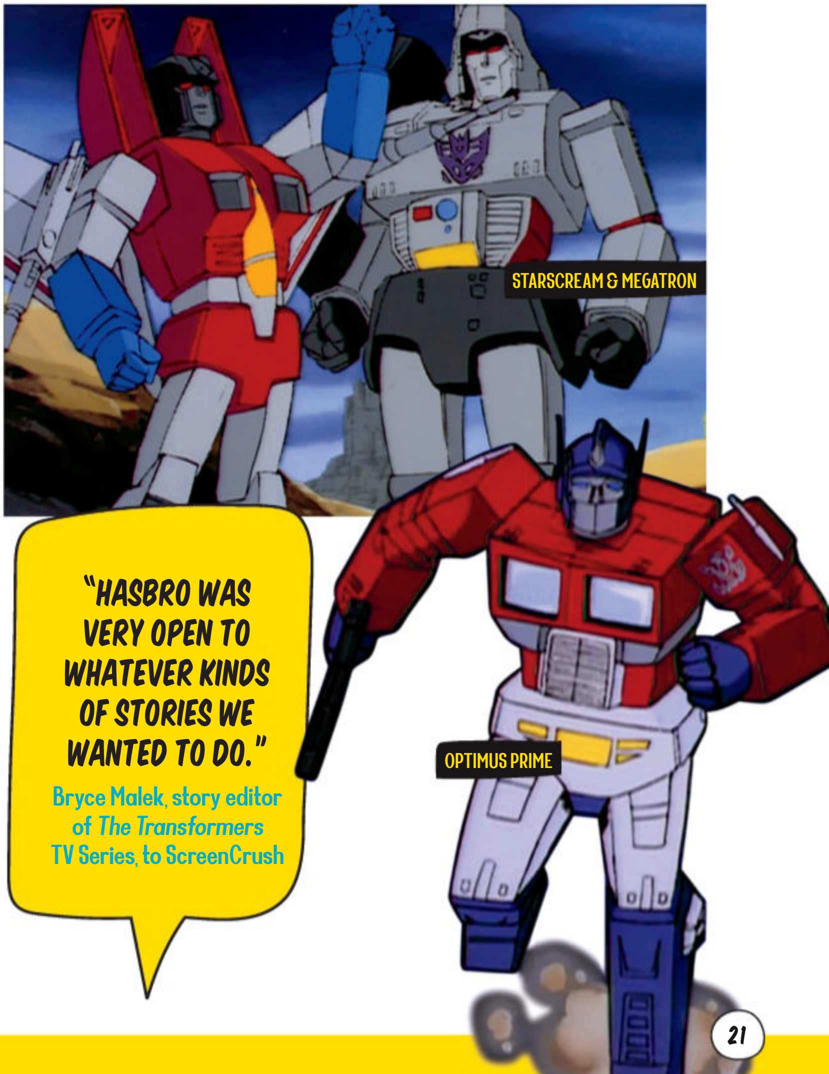
In recent years, the anime adaptations of popular manga series were among the most watched TV shows worldwide. The spread of COVID-19 fast-tracked the trend toward online streaming, where international audiences could access anime, allowing for Japan's media exports to develop into the influential phenomena of today.

A PIONEER STUDIO

Established over 70 years ago, Toei Animation Co. is a long-standing animation studio based in Japan. Toei developed a lasting legacy for animating internationally popular shows. The animation company is responsible for the '80s smash hit *Dragon Ball*, and the '90s darling *Sailor Moon*. Both titles gained worldwide recognition, expansive fan bases and have franchises that span decades.

American production companies capitalized on high exchange rates in Japan in the 1980s, outsourcing American animated series due to cheaper costs for animation. Toei is responsible for animating many American cartoons, including *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends*, *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* and the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Toei animated much of *The Transformers* cartoon, as well as *Transformers: The Movie* and the *Scramble City* OVA. The studio's participation in the production of *The Transformers* eventually declined due to disputes throughout the making of the series' third season.



STARSCREAM & MEGATRON

OPTIMUS PRIME

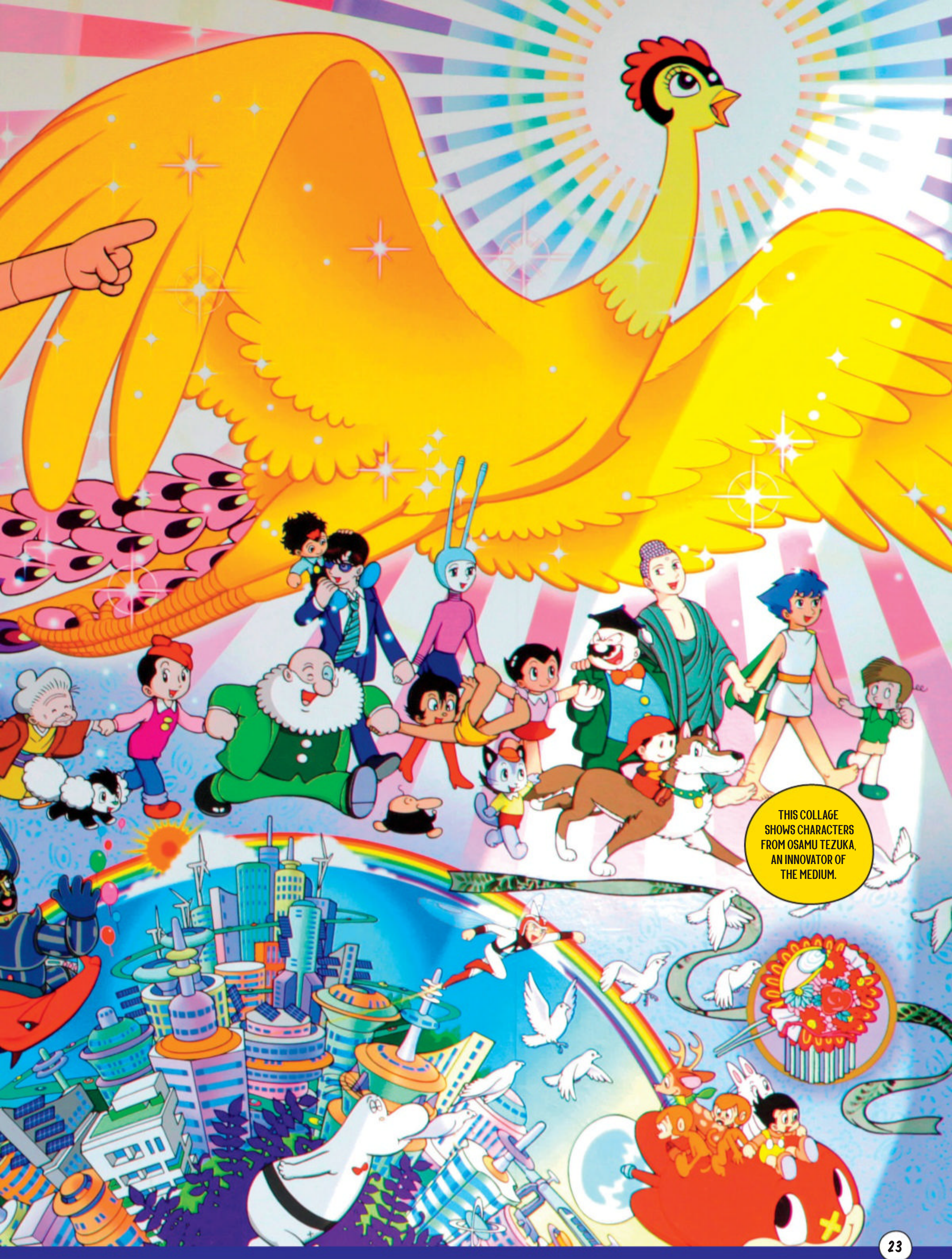
> **"HASBRO WAS VERY OPEN TO WHATEVER KINDS OF STORIES WE WANTED TO DO."**
>
> Bryce Malek, story editor of *The Transformers* TV Series, to ScreenCrush

CHAPTER

№ 2

PIONEERS AND STAR CREATORS

These visionaries helped cement a new art form.



THIS COLLAGE SHOWS CHARACTERS FROM OSAMU TEZUKA, AN INNOVATOR OF THE MEDIUM.

OSAMU TEZUKA WAS BORN IN 1928 AND SAW CAREER SUCCESS AS EARLY AS 1946.

'GODFATHER OF MANGA'

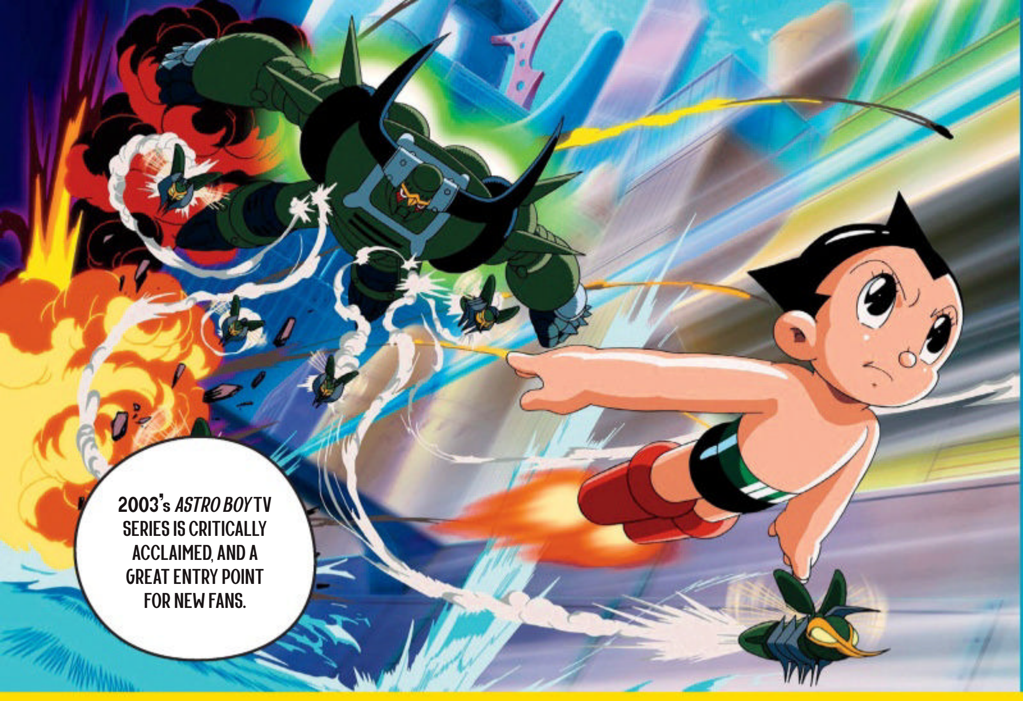
OSAMU TEZUKA

This trailblazer kick-started a global phenomenon.

BY NOAH PETRILLO

WHILE THE ART FORMS THAT INSPIRED the rise of manga in Japan came from many artists, the popularization of manga, especially in the West, is often attributed to just one man: Osamu Tezuka. Nearly always pictured in his signature beret and round glasses, Tezuka was an icon in his own right, and creator of the iconic mangas that turned a niche interest into one of Japan's largest exports.

Raised with an appreciation of books and film from all over the world, Tezuka established his own way of combining influences from



2003's *ASTRO BOY* TV SERIES IS CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED, AND A GREAT ENTRY POINT FOR NEW FANS.

2009's *ASTRO BOY* FILM MARKED THE FIRST CGI ANIMATED APPEARANCE OF THE CHARACTER.

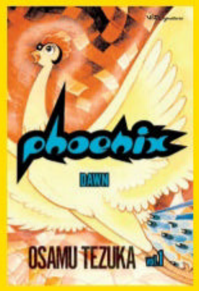
the East and the West, injecting his philosophies of life in a post-World War II world. While many call him "The Japanese Walt Disney," writer Helen McCarthy referred to him as "Walt Disney, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Tim Burton and Carl Sagan all rolled into one incredibly prolific creator." His distinctive illustrations often went on to become television shows, many of which were translated into English and shown in America through the 1960s.

Perhaps his most famous work, *Astro Boy*, came as a direct result of Tezuka's revelations during and immediately following World War II. He was trained as a physician during the war, but chose to dedicate his life to inspiring and reforming the next generation through his art. In a biography on Tezuka, author Philip Brophy states that Tezuka wanted "to not just heal wounded bodies but to heal souls." *Astro Boy* was a perfect vehicle to do so.

> **"YOU WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND A MODERN MANGA THAT WAS NOT INFLUENCED BY ASTRO BOY IN SOME WAY."**
>
> Ann-Marie Cahill, Book Riot

Astro is a robot boy who travels the world with supersonic flight and the ability to speak 100 languages, promoting peace and understanding. This view of the future (at the time, that future was the year 2003) inspired children the world over. The influence of *Astro Boy* is nearly unparalleled in its longevity, getting a CGI film adaptation in 2009, nearly 60 years after Tezuka's manga.

Tezuka also created many mangas that illuminated Japanese history. One of his most beloved works, *Dororo*, features a young rōnin named Hyakkimaru, who was born limbless due to dark magic, but through the healing magic of a doctor, is given the limbs of dead children from the war-torn Sengoku period of Japan, around the year 1500. On his quest to defeat the demons that cursed him, he meets Dororo, a young orphaned thief, and the two team up to complete his quest. The story echoes the tumult Japan faced in the 1940s, showing a surprisingly dark and complex view of humanity. Sakuga Blog writer Kevin Cirugeda says the manga "explores themes worth the price of admission. The anti-war vibes in Tezuka's work are rather obvious."



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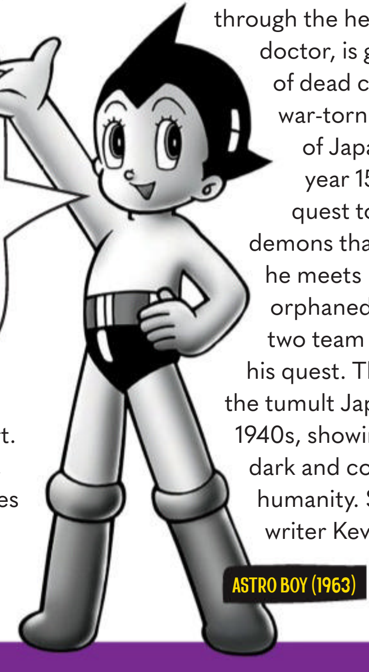
THE LEGEND OF
DORORO AND HYAKKIMARU



ASTRO BOY (1963)

While certainly shaped by Disney's early works, Tezuka's influence came full circle with his 1950 manga, *Kimba the White Lion*. While unheard of to many, Tezuka's creation became the center of controversy when certain critics pointed out glaring similarities between it and the later 1994 Disney classic, *The Lion King*. When leading voice contributor Matthew Broderick signed onto the project to voice Simba, he said in an interview with the *Austin American-Statesman*, "I thought [they] meant Kimba, who was a white lion on TV when I was a little kid. So I kept telling everyone I was going to play Kimba."

Regardless of the connection between the two enduring classics, it is clear that Osamu Tezuka created profound artworks that generations of people all over the world admire to this day.

AWESOME ARTISTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

These innovative geniuses are some of the medium's most beloved icons. **BY GABRIELLA FRISCH**

BEHIND EVERY GREAT MANGA IS AN EVEN GREATER artist. The tales of the legendary storytellers who create manga are as thrilling as the series they produce. Get acquainted with some celebrity mangakas (artists who write and illustrate the titles). These masters are renowned for their creative drive, their ability to entertain an international fan base, and their willingness to produce countless reams of new volumes under impossibly tight deadlines.

AKIRA TORIYAMA

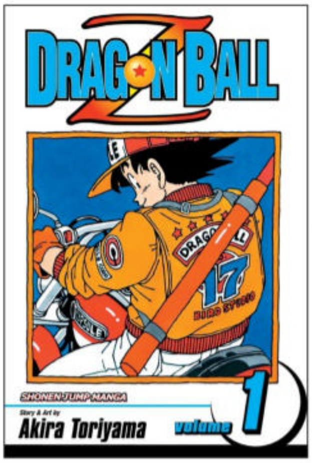
Akira Toriyama became a household name in Japan with his successful serialized manga *Dragon Ball* and *Dr. Slump*, both published in Japan's bestselling and longest-running manga anthology, *Weekly Shonen Jump*.

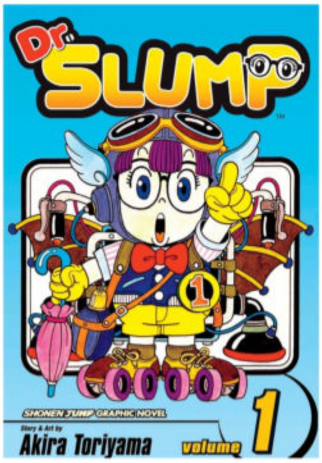
Toriyama took inspiration from Osamu Tezuka, kung fu films and Walt Disney animations when crafting the megahit *Dragon Ball*, which was published from 1984 to 1995. The manga stars Son Goku, who uses his extraordinary strength to locate seven mystical Dragon Balls, which will summon a wish-granting dragon when gathered together.

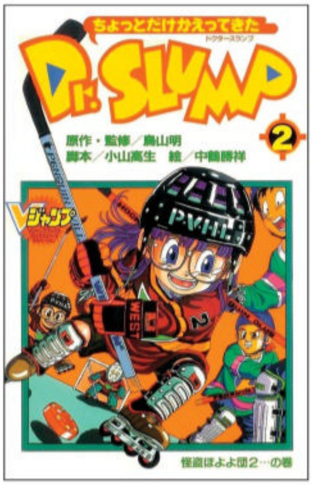
In an interview for *Dragon Ball*'s 30th anniversary, Toriyama spoke about the trends that appear in his character designs. "I always draw strong protagonists," he said. "It's not just Goku, they're all like that. I think it's easy to draw superhumanly strong guys, and fun too." He detailed in an interview with Kanzenshuu that the "process for drawing characters is basically that I start with their personality, and decide on their face next…. Then once the face is done, I can come up with their clothes."

Dragon Ball has become one of the most influential works of manga in recent decades, leaving behind a superhuman-sized legacy for other shonen mangakas to try and fill.

BORN *April 5, 1955* **CAREER STARTED** *1978*


DRAGON BALL Z
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by Akira Toriyama
volume 1


Dr. SLUMP
SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL
Story & Art by Akira Toriyama
volume 1


ちょっとだけかえってきた
Dr. SLUMP
2

DragonBallZ
STORY & ART BY AKIRA TORIYAMA
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
1

RUMIKO TAKAHASHI

This artist's extensive career began in 1978 with *Urusei Yatsura*, a mythological science fiction series. "*Urusei Yatsura* is a title I had been dreaming about since I was very young," Rumiko Takahashi said in an interview with Viz Media. "I love science fiction because sci-fi has tremendous flexibility."

Her later series, *Ranma 1/2,* the gender-bending story of a boy who changes into a girl and back again after falling into a magic spring, was Takahashi's next smash hit, serialized in *Weekly Shonen Sunday* for a total of 38 compiled volumes.

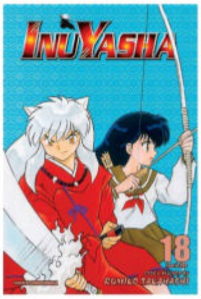
In 1995, Takahashi became a member of an exclusively successful club, as one of the few manga artists ever to sell more than 100 million copies of her compiled works.

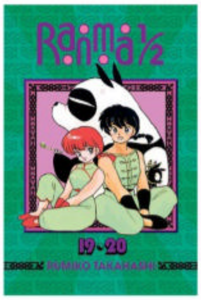
During the latter half of the 1990s, the illustrator continued with short stories and began her next major work, *Inuyasha*. Unlike the majority of her projects, *Inuyasha* features a darker tone and, having been serialized in *Weekly Shonen Sunday* from 1996 to 2008, is her longest series to date.

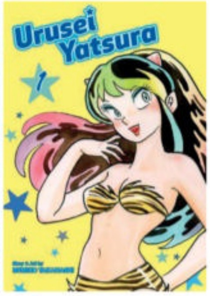
BORN *Oct. 10, 1957* **CAREER STARTED** *1978*

"I ALWAYS WANTED TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL COMIC CREATOR."

Rumiko Takahashi, to Viz Media







HIROHIKO ARAKI

Making his debut as a mangaka in 1980, Hirohiko Araki released his first story, *Poker Under Arms,* which won him a Tezuka award. Seven years later, Araki created his magnum opus, *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*. It became the illustrator's most famous manga and has sold over 120 million volumes. Manga critic Jason Thompson described Araki's style for Anime News Network as largely based on "his funky backgrounds, his love of narration, his taste for the grotesque, [and] his love of the colors blue and pink." Araki's style is certainly unique, unpredictable and hones in on the absurd.

Still being serialized more than 30 years later, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* has been adapted into numerous other forms of media. From 2011 to 2021, Araki produced *JoJolion*, the eighth story arc of the series, serialized in *Ultra Jump* magazine.

BORN *June 7, 1960* **CAREER STARTED** *1980*

> **"IF YOU REALLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO CREATE MANGA...YOU SHOULD TAKE DRAMA CLASSES."**
>
> Naoki Urasawa, to J-Generation

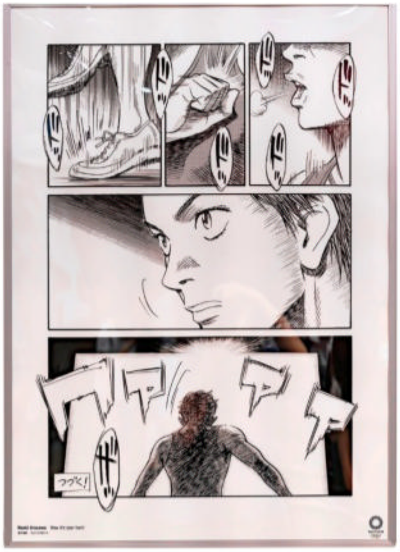
NAOKI URASAWA

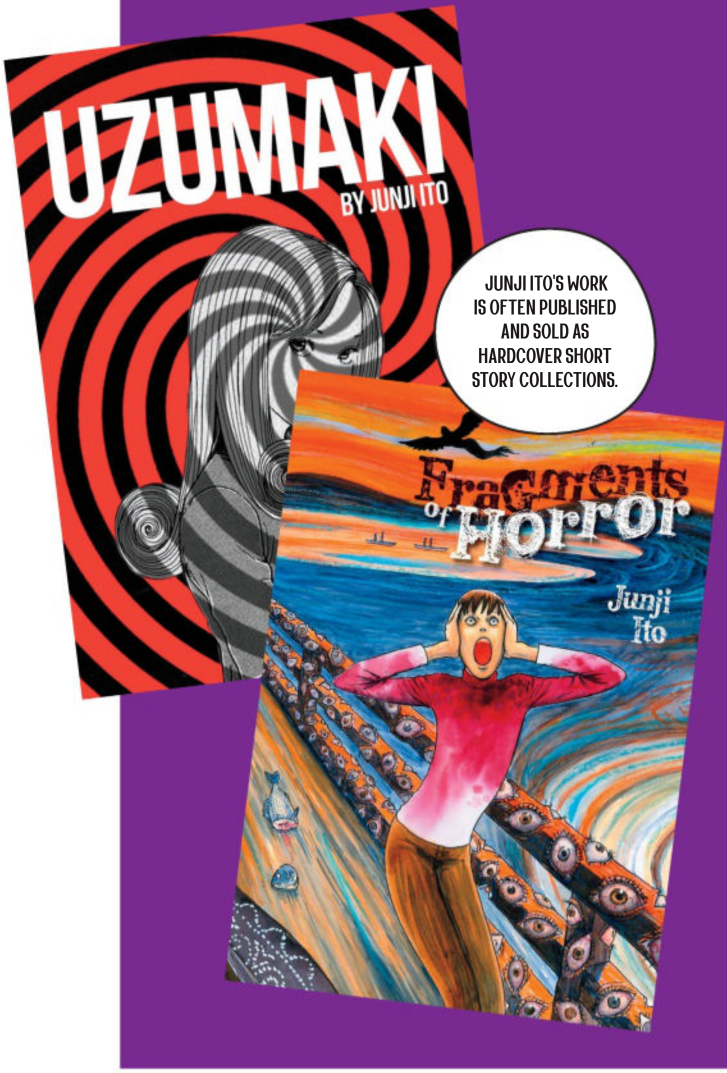
Naoki Urasawa drew his first manga at the age of 4. His professional career began in 1985, when he illustrated the action series *Pineapple Army,* written by Kazuya Kudo. Urasawa developed his own personal style with the thriller *Monster*, which was his first series to receive international acclaim and success.

Urasawa's work can be described as realistic, or directorially based, with cinematic panel layouts. In an interview with David Cirone of J-Generation, Urasawa related his approach to crafting manga as similar "to storyboarding a movie." However, he made clear that he preferred the artistry of manga to filmmaking. "As long as I have a pen and paper, I can create something new," he said. "I can begin to work in my own form of expression without limitations."

After *Monster,* his success continued with the science fiction mystery *20th Century Boys*. He also created the acclaimed series *Pluto*, a reimagining of "The Greatest Robot on Earth" story from Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy*, one of Urasawa's biggest influences.

BORN *Jan. 2, 1960*
CAREER STARTED *1985*





JUNJI ITO'S WORK IS OFTEN PUBLISHED AND SOLD AS HARDCOVER SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS.

JUNJI ITO

The horror mangaka Junji Ito has created a number of notable works including *Tomie*, a series chronicling an immortal girl who drives her admirers to madness; *Uzumaki*, a three-volume series set in a town obsessed with spirals; and *Gyo*, a two-volume story in which fish are controlled by a strain of sentient bacteria called "the death stench."

Ito has been inspired by horror since childhood. He considers the occult horror films of the 1970's that featured Dracula and Frankenstein, as well as period dramas of ghosts, to have shaped his artistic tastes. Ito's work consists of many subgenres of horror, mainly focusing on body horror and cosmic horror. "The human mind is the scariest part of oneself," Ito told Viz Media about his focus on body horror. "When the body manifests those fears, the body becomes the scariest part, so I drew a lot of transformations."

Other prevalent themes included in Ito's canon are the relationship of predator to prey, loss of humanity and obsession. The universe Ito depicts is cruel and capricious; his characters often find themselves victims of malevolent unnatural circumstances. He takes inspiration from his own fears as well, including death, war, insects and being watched.

BORN *July 31, 1963* **CAREER STARTED** *1987*

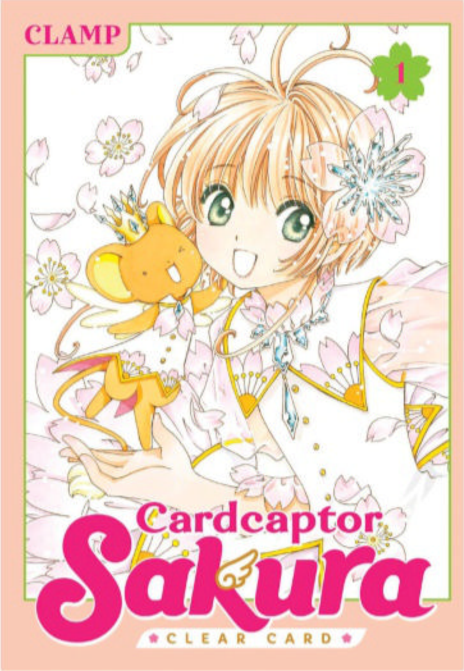
CLAMP

Having published 22 popular manga series over the past two decades, the all-female manga artist group CLAMP is respected both locally and internationally. First formed as a group of 11 high school students creating dōjinshi (self-published fan works), CLAMP began producing original manga in 1987. By 1993, CLAMP had been reduced to its four current members: Nanase Ohkawa, Mokona Apapa, Tsubaki Nekoi and Satsuki Igarashi.

Ohkawa helms the group as leader and writer, while the other three artists shift roles for each series. "After I create the outline, we discuss who's going to draw pictures, or if we'll all draw together, since several of us can draw," said Ohkawa in an interview for the book *Manga: Masters of the Art*. "We sometimes have a work in which one person designs the characters and another person draws the actual story, so we divide up the works depending on the situation."

CLAMP is best known for *Cardcaptor Sakura*, a story following a 10-year-old girl who accidentally releases a deck of magical cards that she must collect before havoc is wreaked on the world. Another of their popular series, *X*, is an intense dark fantasy dealing with themes of fate and freedom.

LAUNCHED *1987*



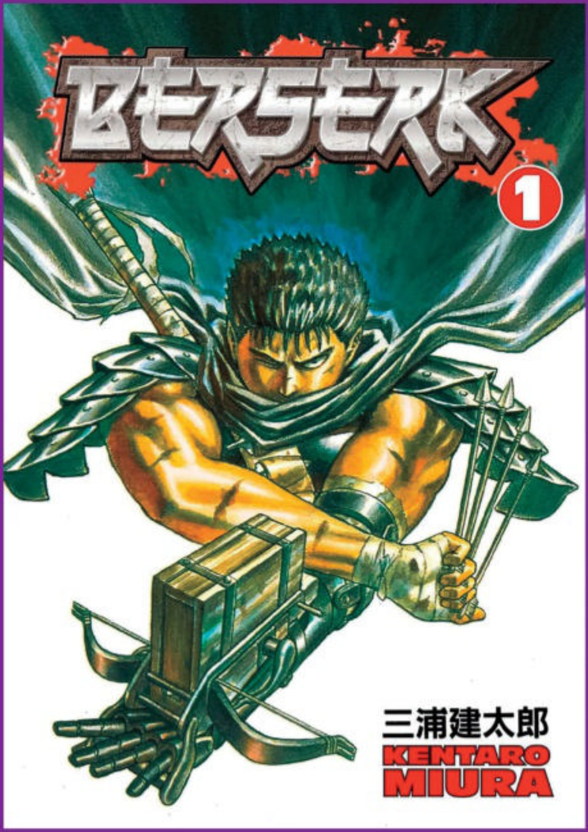
BERSERK IS NOT FOR KIDS. IT FEATURES AN 18+ (R) RATING FOR ITS GRAPHIC CONTENT.

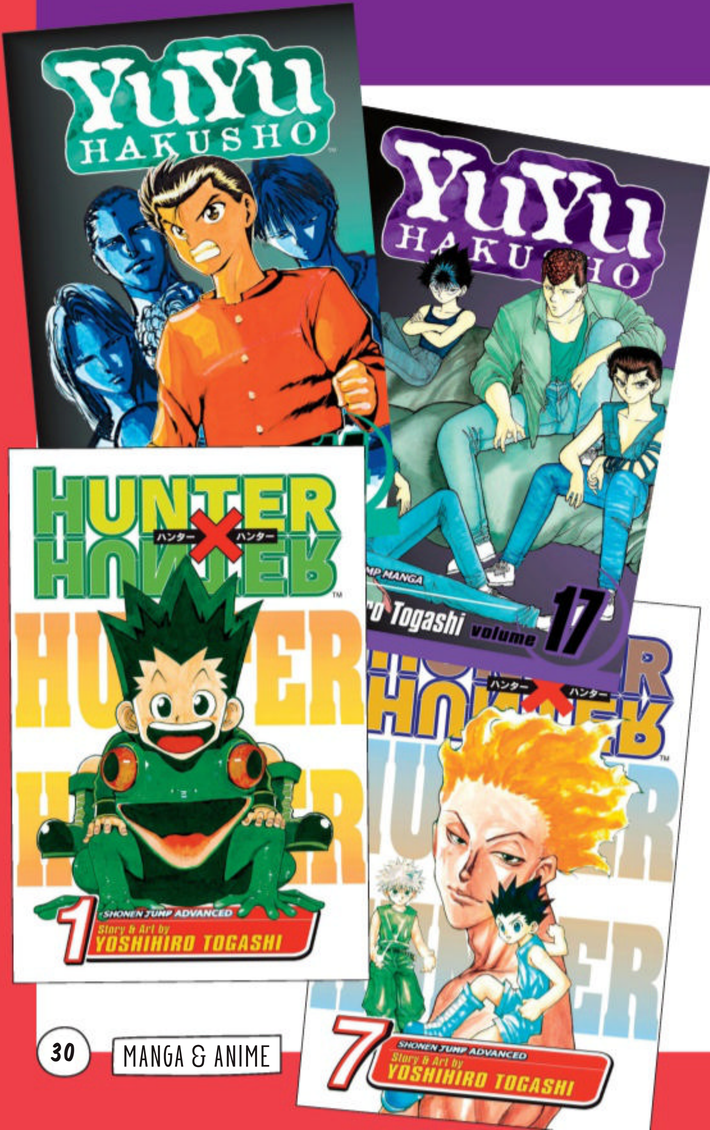
KENTARO MIURA

Kentaro Miura left his mark on the manga world through his series *Berserk*, an acclaimed dark fantasy manga that has sold more than 50 million copies worldwide. The series "is most famous for its dark themes and violence," wrote journalist Gene Park for *The Washington Post*. On *Berserk's* success, Park credited "the strength of its character work and its complicated intrapersonal relationships as much as its Hieronymus Bosch-inspired art style."

Sadly, Miura died on May 6, 2021. He was 54 years old. Artists and creators from around the world paid tribute to Miura and *Berserk* following the news. The series will continue and conclude under the guidance of his staff and existing story notes.

LIFE *1966-2021* **CAREER STARTED** *1989*


BERSERK
1
三浦建太郎
KENTARO MIURA


YuYu HAKUSHO
YuYu HAKUSHO
Togashi volume 17
HUNTER × HUNTER
ハンター ハンター
1
SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED
Story & Art by
YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI
7
SHONEN JUMP ADVANCED
Story & Art by
YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

Hunter x Hunter and *YuYu Hakusho*, two long-running serialized manga published over several decades, cemented Yoshihiro Togashi's relevance and celebrity as a mangaka.

YuYu Hakusho, based in Togashi's interests in the occult and horror films, follows Yusuke Urameshi, an "underworld detective." The manga, which lasted 175 chapters from 1990 to 1994, went on to sell more than 50 million copies worldwide.

Hunter x Hunter, an action-adventure manga, began serialization in 1998. It also achieved commercial success, with the first 20 volumes selling nearly 55 million copies in Japan as of 2011. *Hunter x Hunter* is known for having long and distinguishable story arcs that span genre and setting. Writing for Anime News Network, Jason Thompson said, "One of the problems with summarizing *Hunter x Hunter* is that it's like every shonen manga in one.... It's as if whenever Togashi gets tired, he simply changes *Hunter x Hunter* into a different manga."

BORN *April 27, 1966* **CAREER STARTED** *1990*

TAKEHIKO INOUE

Known for his detailed line art and unmatched ability to depict physicality, Takehiko Inoue found fame with his manga *Slam Dunk*, a series about a fictional high school basketball team. It was published in *Weekly Shonen Jump* from 1990 to 1996 and has sold over 170 million copies worldwide. In 1995, it received the 40th annual Shogakukan Manga Award for shonen manga, and in 2009 it ranked first in Japan's Media Arts 100 poll for manga series.

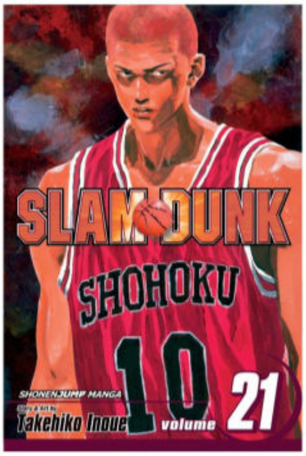
The manga's popularity caused a surge of interest in basketball among Japanese youth, leading to Inoue and his publisher Shueisha creating the Slam Dunk Scholarship program in 2006. "[I wanted] to promote basketball in Japan, since its future is in the hands of today's youth," Inoue said in an interview with Shueisha. He even received commendation from the Japan Basketball Association for helping popularize the sport in the country.

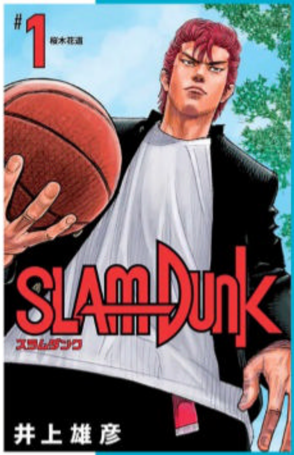
Inoue's next hit series was *Vagabond*, a samurai story centered around historical figure Miyamoto Musashi. Still ongoing, Inoue has adapted much of the story from fictionalized accounts of Musashi from the historical novelist Eiji Yoshikawa.

BORN *Jan. 12, 1967*
CAREER STARTED *1990*

"IT IS ONE OF THE HAPPIEST THINGS FOR AN ARTIST TO…HAVE PEOPLE READ THEIR WORK EVEN AFTER SOME TIME HAS PASSED."

Takehiko Inoue, to Manga Planet


SLAM DUNK
SHOHOKU
10
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Takehiko Inoue
volume 21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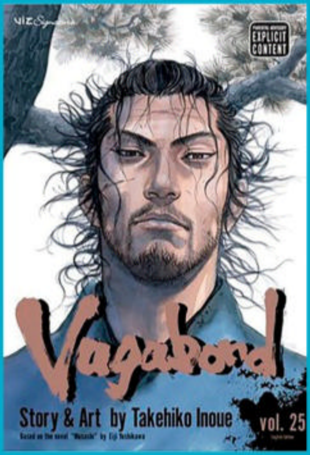
SLAM DUNK
スラムダンク
井上雄彦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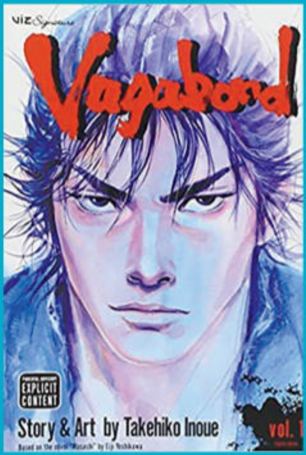
Vagabond
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue
vol. 25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Vagabond
EXPLICIT CONTENT
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue
vol.

THE LIFE OF A SUCCESSFUL MANGA SERIES

What starts out as drawings on a page can end up on store shelves and on TV and film screens worldwide.

IN 2020, NETFLIX SIGNED A "first-look" deal with comic book publisher Boom! Studios. Essentially, Netflix would have first dibs on adapting any Boom! comics from the page to the screen.

While North American producers are now starting to realize the power of comic books, Japan has long understood that manga can be a whole lot more than just drawings on paper. Over the last 40 years, hundreds of manga have led to success and acclaim with TV adaptations, merchandise deals and more. Over time, we've seen a pattern to how manga become worldwide sensations. Let's take a look at *My Hero Academia* as an example.

IN THE WORLD OF *MY HERO ACADEMIA*, SUPERPOWERS ARE COMMONPLACE– 80% OF PEOPLE HAVE ONE.

BECOME SERIALIZED IN A POPULAR MAGAZINE

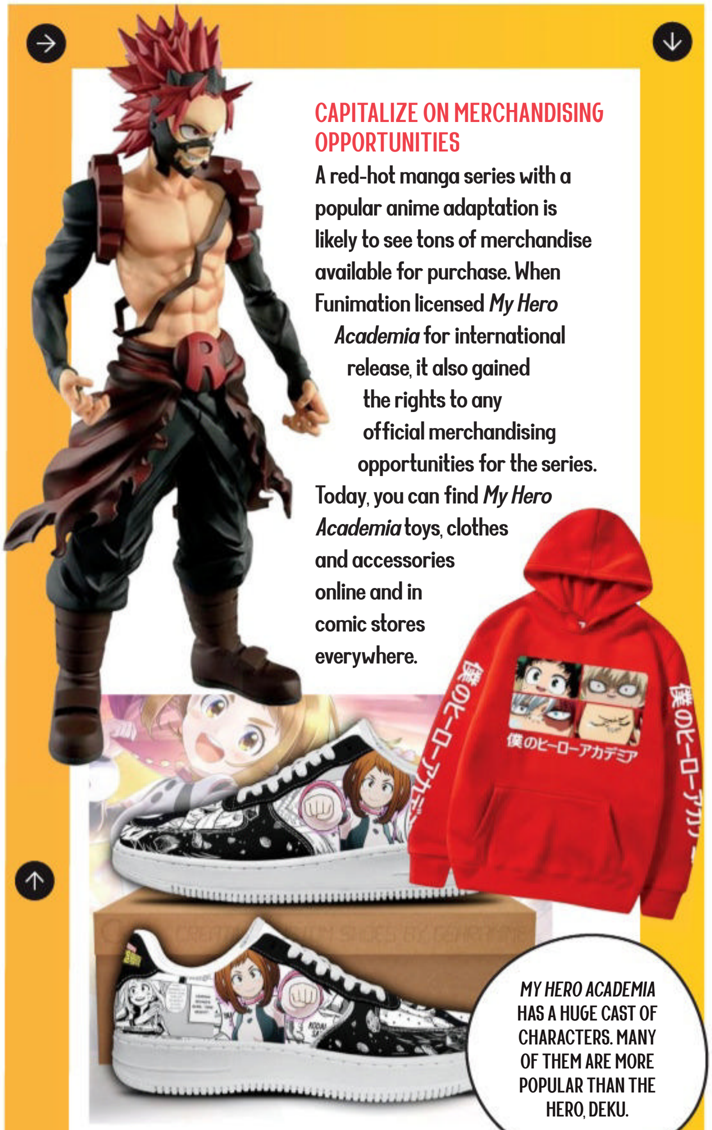
One way to quickly build an audience is to publish a new manga story in a popular, serialized manga magazine. *My Hero Academia* began serialization in *Weekly Shonen Jump* magazine in July 2014, and quickly began ranking in the magazine's top five most popular series. Seeing its immediate and sustained popularity, Viz Media announced in 2015 that they would officially translate the series into English for release in the Viz *Shonen Jump* magazine.

MY HERO ACADEMIA
僕のヒーローアカデミア

MY HERO ACADEMIA
JUMP COMICS
僕のヒーローアカデミア
Vol. 1
KOHEI HORIKOSHI

BOAST BIG INDIVIDUAL SALES NUMBERS

Many readers discover new series with manga magazines such as *Shonen Jump*, but the most popular series sell well outside of magazines. Standalone volumes of *My Hero Academia* appeared on bookstore shelves in Japanese in 2014 and English in 2015. The English version ranked in *The New York Times* bestsellers list upon release in 2015.



CAPITALIZE ON MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

A red-hot manga series with a popular anime adaptation is likely to see tons of merchandise available for purchase. When Funimation licensed *My Hero Academia* for international release, it also gained the rights to any official merchandising opportunities for the series. Today, you can find *My Hero Academia* toys, clothes and accessories online and in comic stores everywhere.

MY HERO ACADEMIA HAS A HUGE CAST OF CHARACTERS. MANY OF THEM ARE MORE POPULAR THAN THE HERO, DEKU.

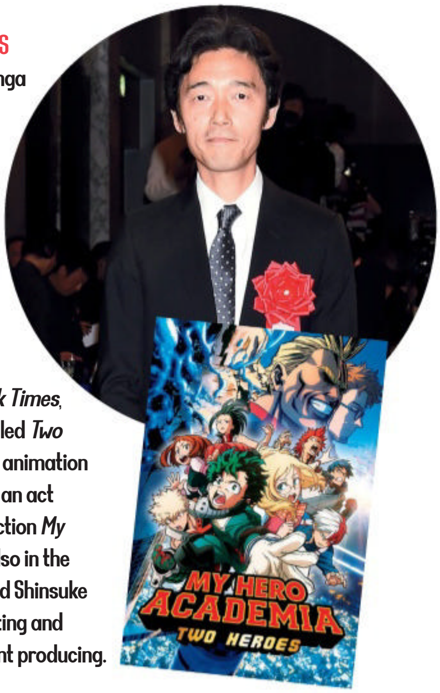
SECURE AN ANIME SERIES ADAPTATION

When a manga series is popular enough, it is often greenlit for an anime adaptation, allowing it to find new audiences. *My Hero Academia* was greenlit for adaptation in 2015, with the anime airing in 2016. Funimation licensed the series for an English release, and distributed it on home media in 2017. *My Hero Academia* premiered on North American television in 2018 on Adult Swim's Toonami programming block.

SPAWN SPINOFF SERIES

Many successful manga series spawn sequels and spinoffs based on the original work. In the case of *My Hero Academia*, with its colorful and plentiful cast of characters, three other series were born: *Smash!!* (2015), *Vigilantes* (2016) and *Team-Up Missions* (2019). *Vigilantes* in particular was one of Barnes & Noble's favorite manga of 2018, calling it "completely enjoyable on its own."

GET THEATRICAL AND LIVE-ACTION RELEASES

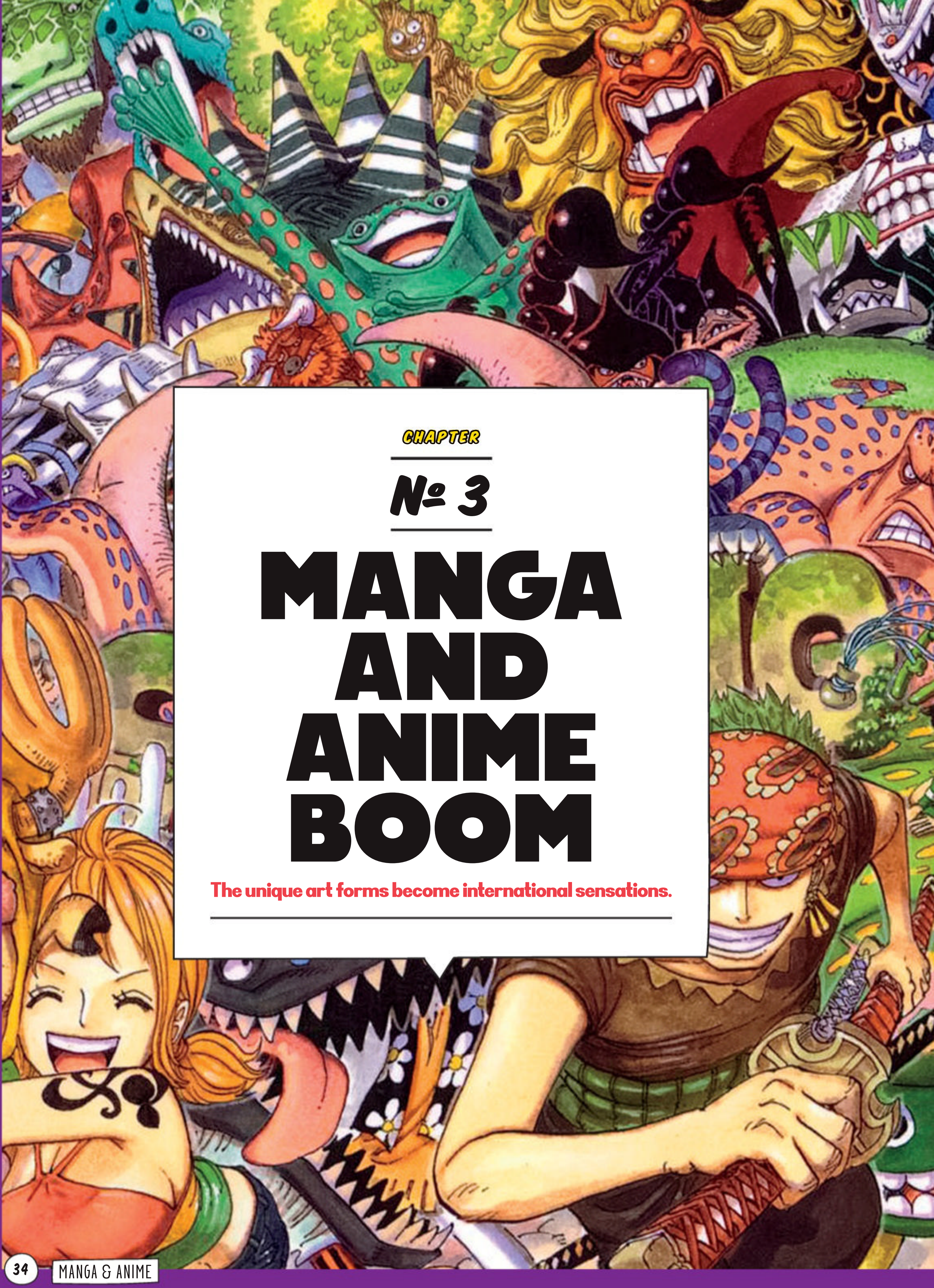


A telltale sign that a manga has reached the upper echelons of success is film adaptation. *My Hero Academia* has not one but three animated films: *Two Heroes* (2018), *Heroes Rising* (2019) and *World Heroes' Mission* (2021). Writing for *The New York Times*, reviewer Teo Bugbee called *Two Heroes* "an exhilarating animation that frames heroism as an act of community." A live-action *My Hero Academia* film is also in the works, with the renowned Shinsuke Sato (above right) directing and Legendary Entertainment producing.

> "LIKE SPIDER-MAN, [THE HERO] DEKU HAS TO LEARN TO HARNESS HIS NEW POWERS."
>
> Charles Solomon, *Los Angeles Times*

My Hero Academia is not the first series to follow this pathway to success. Below are a few other shonen series that followed a similar formula, and also achieved international success.

Dragon Ball
One Piece
Demon Slayer
Jujutsu Kaisen

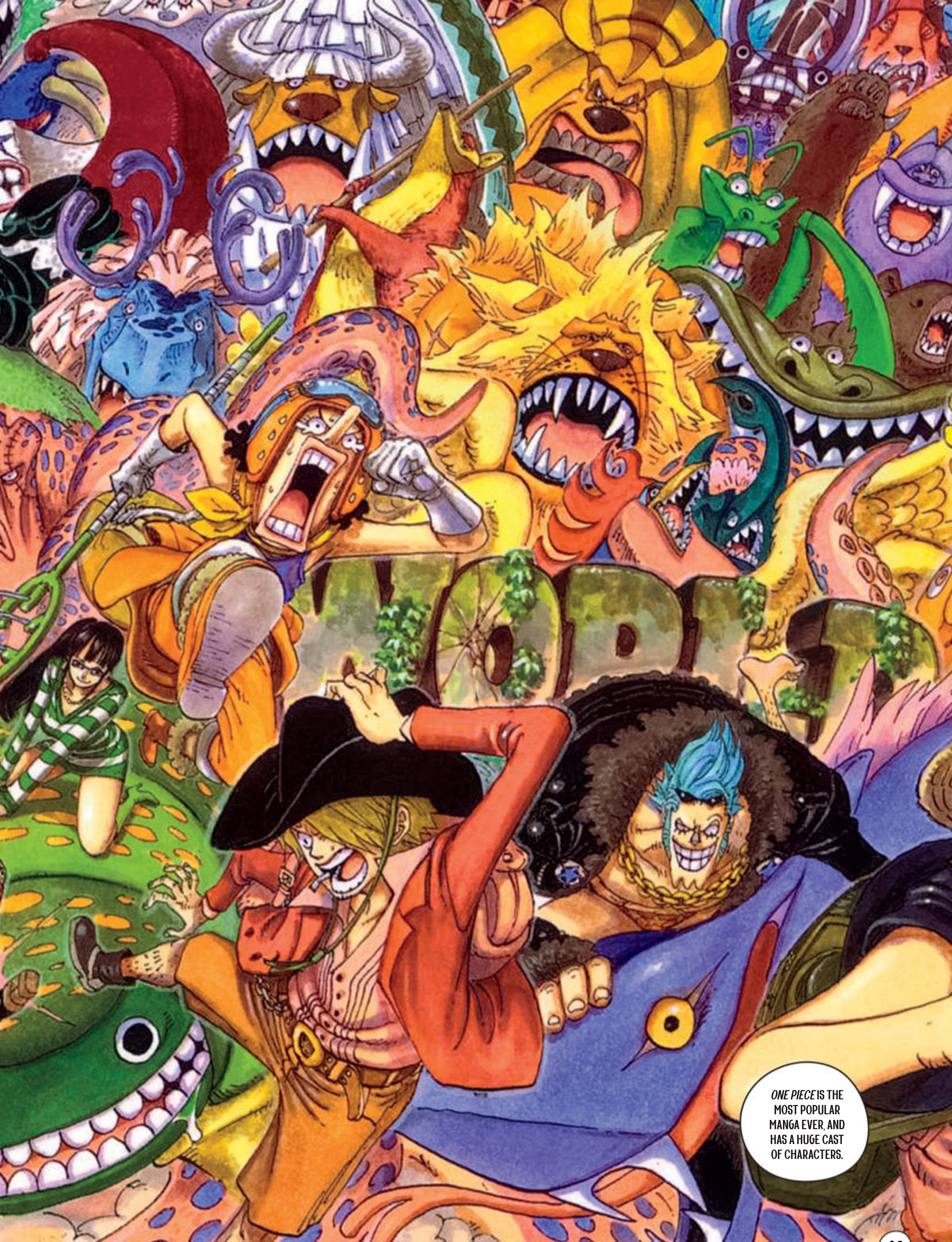


CHAPTER

№ 3

MANGA AND ANIME BOOM

The unique art forms become international sensations.



ONE PIECE IS THE MOST POPULAR MANGA EVER, AND HAS A HUGE CAST OF CHARACTERS.

GOING GLOBAL

TV translations and theatrical releases expand anime's reach.

BY NOAH PETRILLO

ROBOTECH
THE COMPLETE SERIES
DVD VIDEO

ROBOTECH RAN FOR 85 EPISODES AND SPAWNED MANY SUBSEQUENT BOOKS AND COMICS.

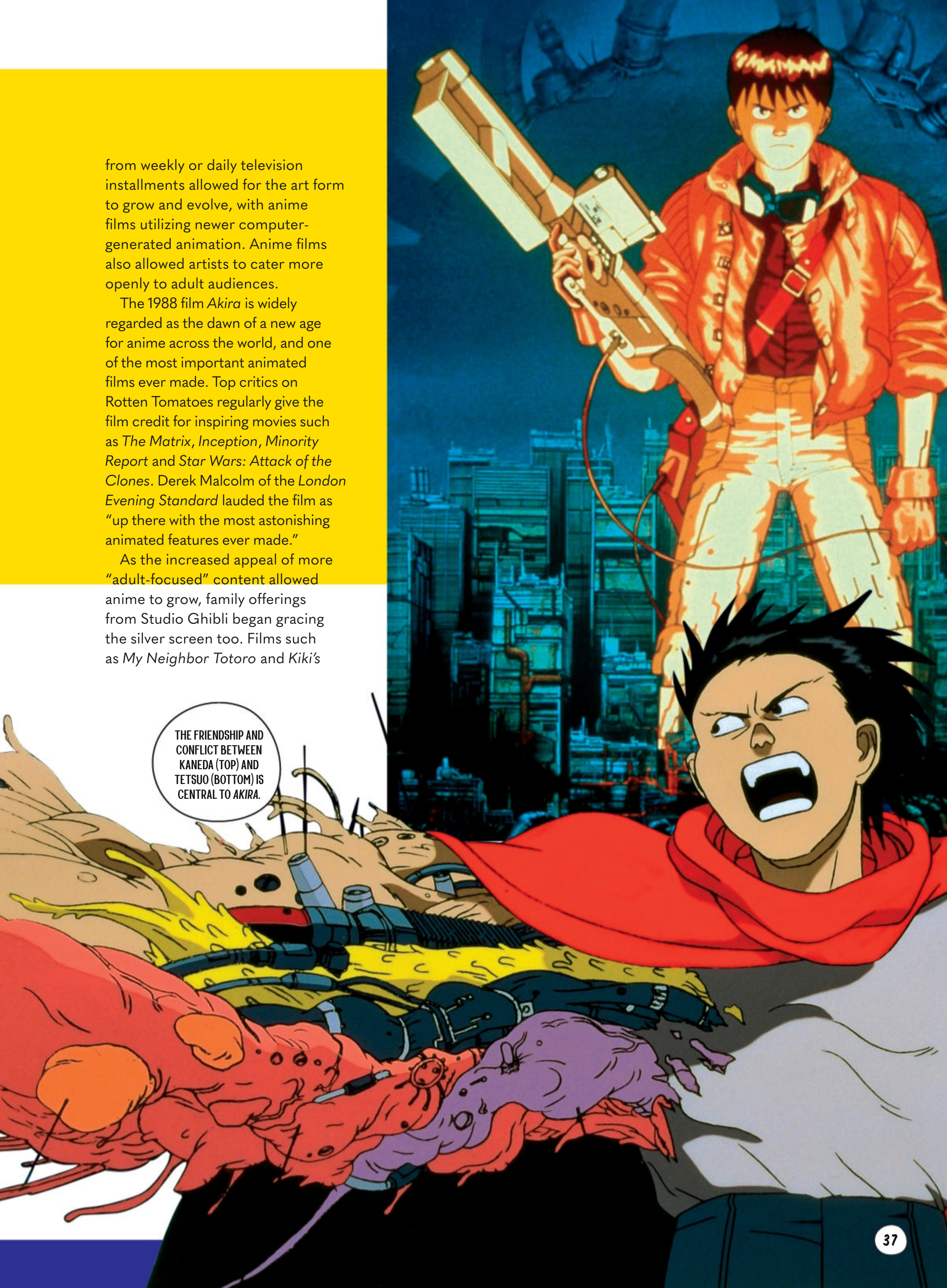
WHILE WESTERN ANIMATION BECAME a regular part of theatrical release schedules as early as the 1960s, Japanese anime had a tougher time growing to the same level of popularity in America. This trend started to change in the 1980s as new anime made with an older, more global audience came to prominence.

One of the first hit anime series designed specifically for American audiences was 1985's *Robotech*. While most anime shows released one new episode per week in Japan, American animated shows generally released five episodes per week. This made it difficult for anime programs to get syndicated on American networks. To fit the release schedule and volume, *Robotech* was actually created out of three similar but distinct Japanese anime shows. The final product remains a unique story of robotic advancement and extraterrestrial wars centered on the mysterious energy source called "protoculture." The Anime Review called the show "one of the most important landmarks in the history of anime coming to America."

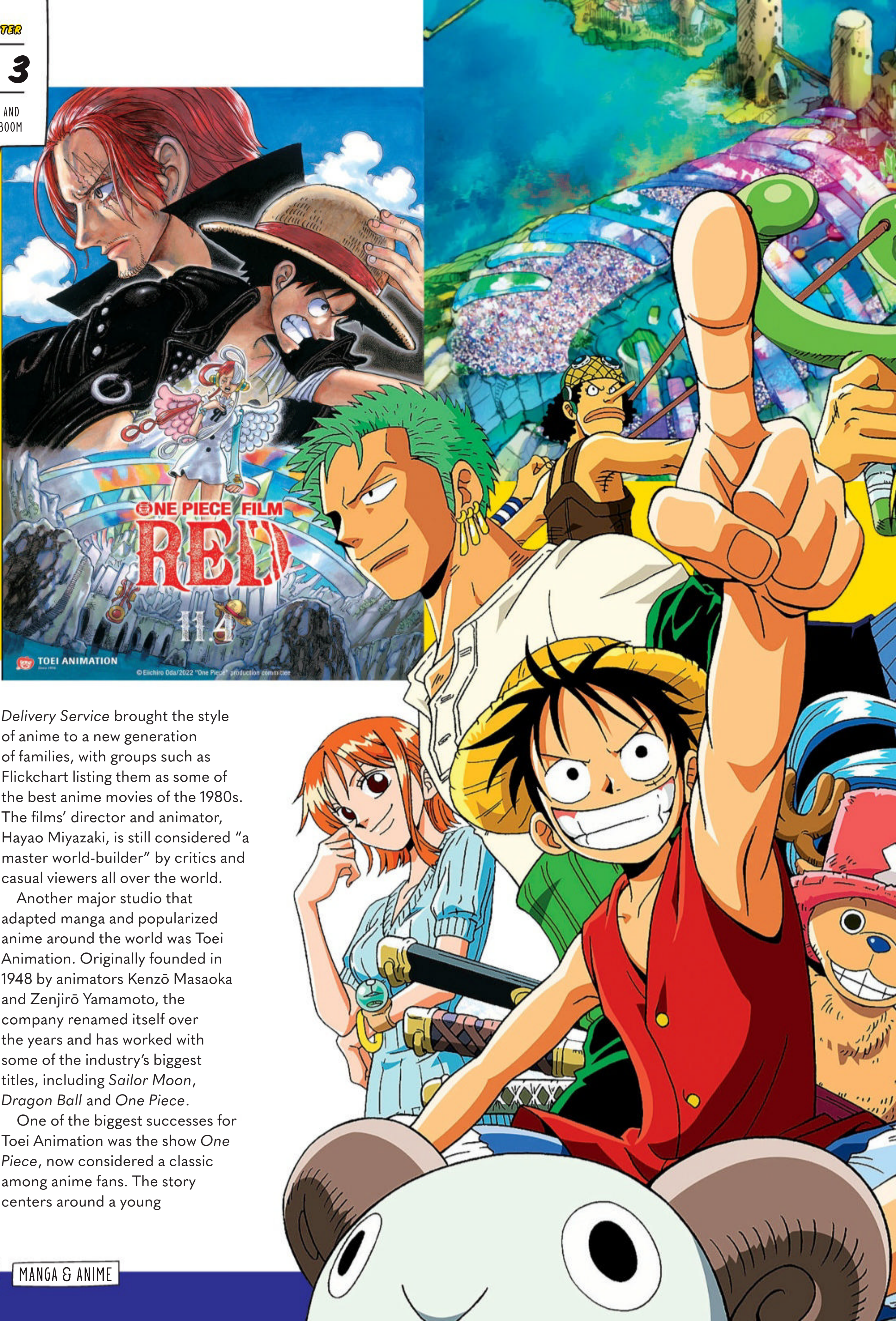
The 1980s also saw the rise of anime theatrical releases. Departing from weekly or daily television installments allowed for the art form to grow and evolve, with anime films utilizing newer computer-generated animation. Anime films also allowed artists to cater more openly to adult audiences.

The 1988 film *Akira* is widely regarded as the dawn of a new age for anime across the world, and one of the most important animated films ever made. Top critics on Rotten Tomatoes regularly give the film credit for inspiring movies such as *The Matrix*, *Inception*, *Minority Report* and *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones*. Derek Malcolm of the *London Evening Standard* lauded the film as "up there with the most astonishing animated features ever made."

As the increased appeal of more "adult-focused" content allowed anime to grow, family offerings from Studio Ghibli began gracing the silver screen too. Films such as *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Kiki's*



THE FRIENDSHIP AND CONFLICT BETWEEN KANEDA (TOP) AND TETSUO (BOTTOM) IS CENTRAL TO *AKIRA*.



©Eiichiro Oda/2022 "One Piece" production committee

Delivery Service brought the style of anime to a new generation of families, with groups such as Flickchart listing them as some of the best anime movies of the 1980s. The films' director and animator, Hayao Miyazaki, is still considered "a master world-builder" by critics and casual viewers all over the world.

Another major studio that adapted manga and popularized anime around the world was Toei Animation. Originally founded in 1948 by animators Kenzō Masaoka and Zenjirō Yamamoto, the company renamed itself over the years and has worked with some of the industry's biggest titles, including *Sailor Moon*, *Dragon Ball* and *One Piece*.

One of the biggest successes for Toei Animation was the show *One Piece*, now considered a classic among anime fans. The story centers around a young

IN *ONE PIECE*, LUFFY AND HIS CREW ARE COLLECTIVELY CALLED "THE STRAW-HAT PIRATES."

> "*ONE PIECE* IS A SILLY STORY ABOUT A RUBBER PIRATE. IT'S ALSO A STORY ABOUT FOUND FAMILY…PEOPLE WHO DON'T FIT IN."
>
> Ana Diaz, Polygon

TRANSLATION WOES

As anime shows and movies became more popular and available in the U.S., a major question started to bubble to the surface: translation. For about as long as anime has been watched, fans both casual and die-hard have debated whether to watch anime in Japanese with subtitles ("subs") or with English voice acting added postproduction ("dubs").

In the earlier days of anime's popularity in America, many audiences weren't actually given any choice between subs and dubs. While theatrical screenings of anime films, especially at independent theaters, would sometimes show the film in Japanese with English subtitles, television anime almost exclusively aired with English dubs. Moreover, as Lisa Marie Cooper from Right Stuf Anime remarks, "some titles were only available [to own] dubbed into English, as sales generally favored dubs."

Despite increasing demand and plenty of monetary opportunity to be had, English dubs were often rushed or done with very small budgets, even for big series. This led to sloppy final products with poorly timed or mistranslated lines.

Early on in the history of the venerable Studio Ghibli, Hayao Miyazaki expressed his discontent with many Japanese-to-English dubs of anime films, and went on to sign an exclusive deal with Disney to dub and distribute his films. One of the first truly "successful" dubs may have come from Studio Ghibli's 1997 film *Princess Mononoke*. Miramax Films handled the process, and hired author Neil Gaiman to write the English version of the script. However, it became clear during the process that creative differences would inevitably arise from the very process of translation itself.

According to Steve Alpert, who worked with Studio Ghibli on English translations and wrote a memoir of his experience, some of these differences were unavoidable. In his memoir he asked and explored the question: "What exactly is a proper translation?" There are some Japanese phrases that simply don't have direct translations into English. What's more, Disney often wanted to use the translation process as an opportunity to change elements of the story in order to offer more appeal to American audiences and bridge perceived cultural divides. The difficulty of this process was handled more eloquently in some cases, although less so in others.

While the dub version of *Princess Mononoke* was generally well received, the same can't necessarily be said for *Pokémon: Indigo League*. One of the most famous anime shows of all time, the English dub in some moments failed to translate the tone of certain characters. As explained by CBR writer John Witiw, the villains of the show, Team Rocket, were often sarcastic in the original Japanese. In the English dub however, they actually seem like tangential albeit bumbling good guys. Part of their signature catchphrase, to "protect the world from devastation" is, in the Japanese version, followed by their Pokémon, Meowth, adding, "just kidding." Meowth's end comment is left out of the English dub, leading to a little confusion about Team Rocket's motives.

Today, with sky-high demand and ease of access to anime via streaming, audiences can thankfully make their own decision and view most anime with either dubs or subs.

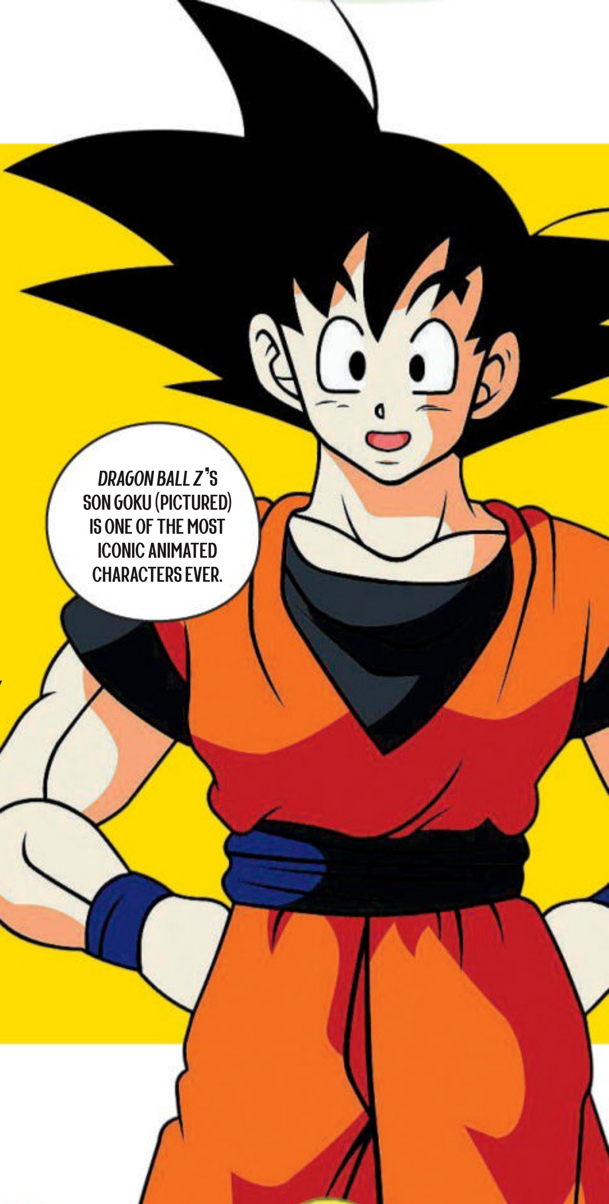
pirate named Luffy. Luffy is a boy allured to the seaward life by the adventure and mystery of traditional pirates wearing eye-patches. He is a good-hearted guy, and not interested in looting or pillaging like pirates of real-world history. Luffy, as well as the other pirates that make up the show's entertaining cast, are all after the coveted and elusive "one piece" treasure, after which the show is named. The story about a scrappy young man in a seedy yet fantastical world, doing morally questionable things with pure intentions is similar to other classics such as *Cowboy Bebop*. According to CBR.com, *One Piece* went on to inspire more modern anime such as Netflix's *Seven Deadly Sins* and *Hunter x Hunter*.

The mounting success of manga as well as anime shows and feature films continued to attract international attention. By the 1990s, American distribution and advertising companies were getting more manga and anime content into the hands of American consumers. Industry-veteran companies such as Central Park Media and Funimation came to prominence at this time. These companies sold VHS tapes and eventually DVDs that allowed viewers to own whole series and watch them at their own pace for the first time.

One of the defining anime series of this period was *Dragon Ball Z*. A continuation of *Dragon Ball*, which first debuted as a manga in 1984, the show follows protagonist Son Goku as he trains with his friends and defeats evildoers in epic superpowered fisticuffs. Today, the show has been broadcast in 81 countries and has 15 feature films to its name, as well as over 50 video games. John Walsh, creator of the popular YouTube channel Super Eyepatch Wolf, called *Dragon Ball Z* "the defining moment in shonen anime and manga."

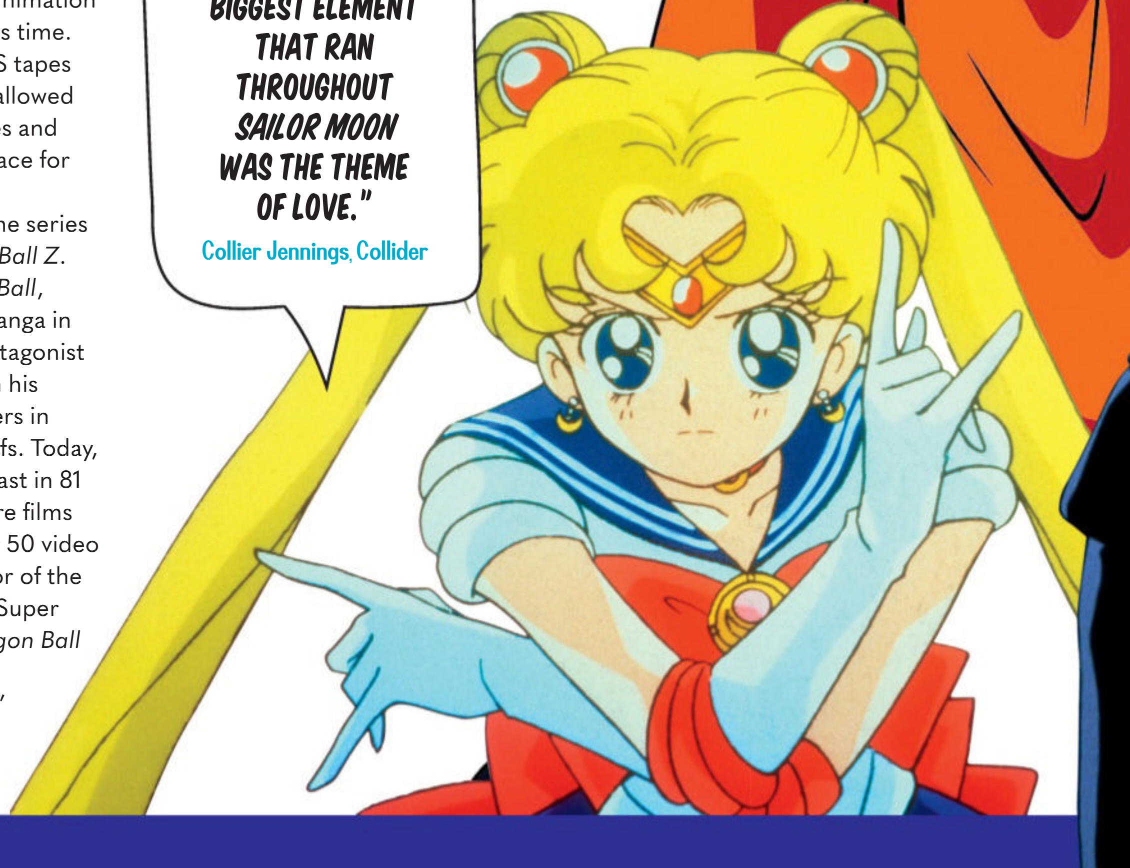
Dragon Ball Z, along with plenty of other wildly successful series, aired in North America on Toonami, a programming block on Cartoon Network. Toonami was one of the major hubs for people of all ages to watch anime shows in North America, especially in the 1990s. The block is responsible for introducing many of today's most popular anime shows to American audiences, including *Dragon Ball Z* and *Sailor Moon*. WhatCulture writer Motzie Dapul lauded *Sailor Moon* in particular for giving young viewers "strong yet unapologetically feminine heroes to look up to."

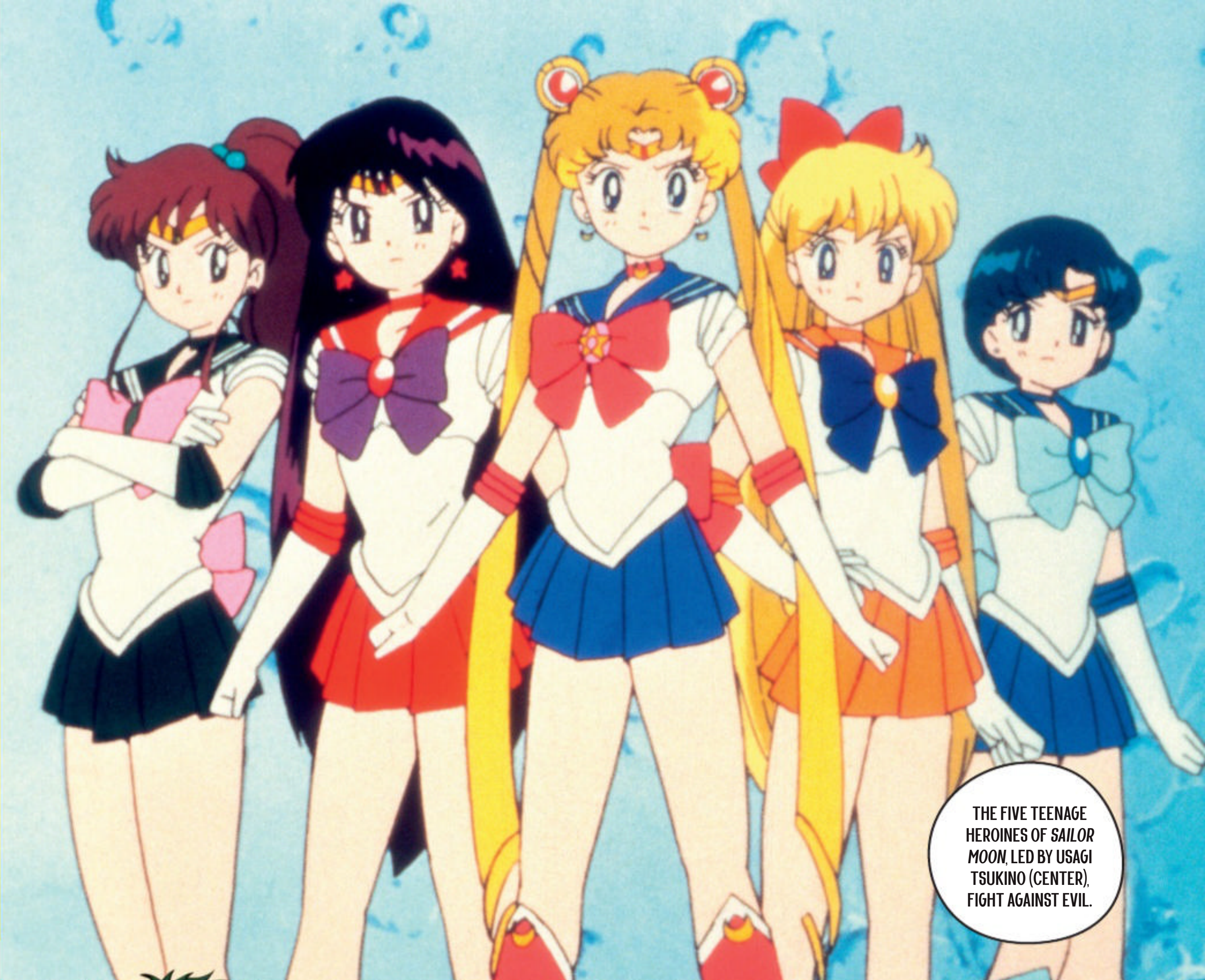
Since the explosion of anime that began in the 1980s, both manga and anime have become some of Japan's most profitable and reliable exports. In 2020 alone, Japan grossed more than $9 billion USD exporting manga and anime products and related merchandise.



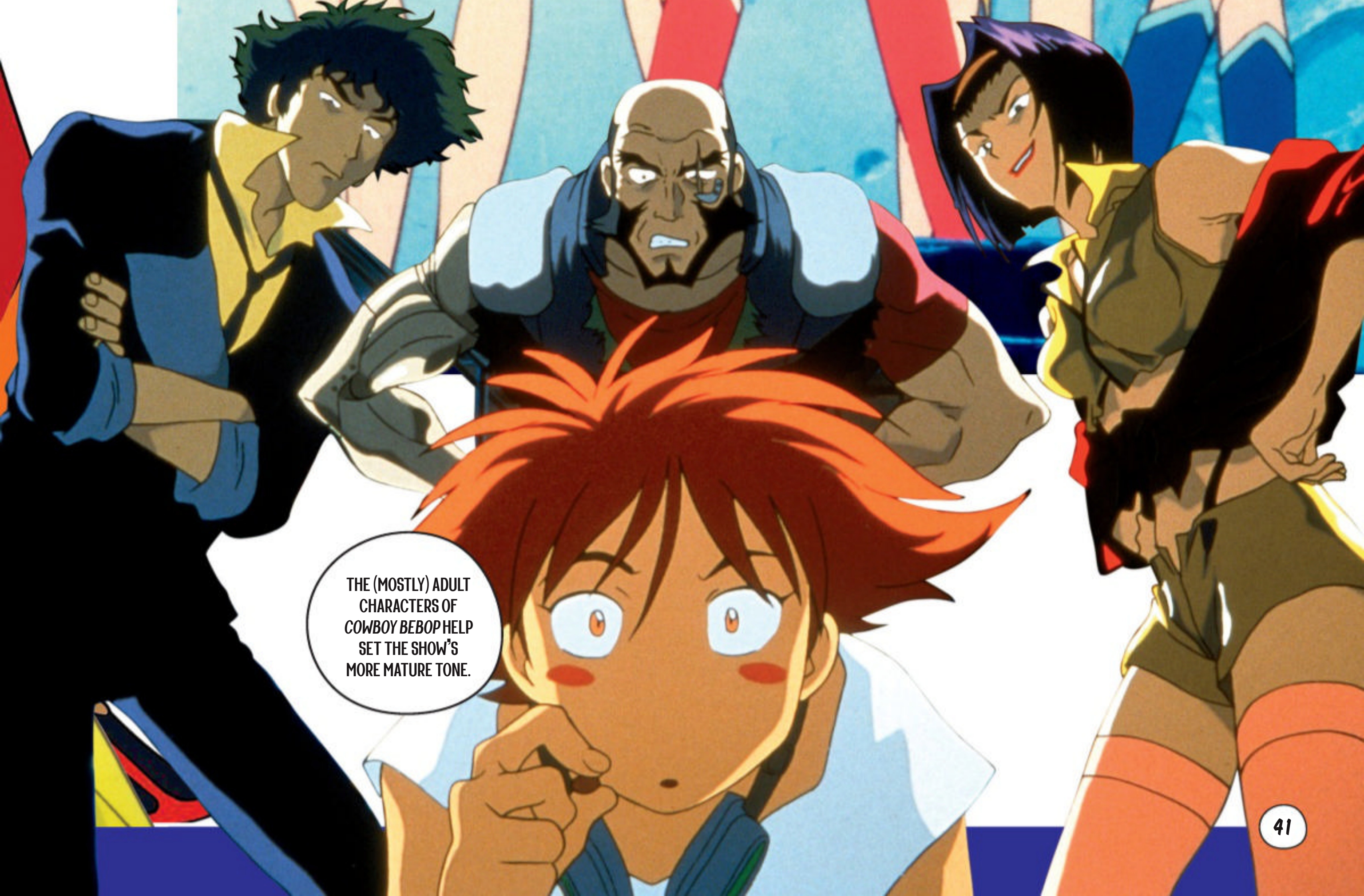
DRAGON BALL Z'S SON GOKU (PICTURED) IS ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC ANIMATED CHARACTERS EVER.

> "PERHAPS THE BIGGEST ELEMENT THAT RAN THROUGHOUT *SAILOR MOON* WAS THE THEME OF LOVE."
>
> Collier Jennings, Collider





THE FIVE TEENAGE HEROINES OF *SAILOR MOON*, LED BY USAGI TSUKINO (CENTER), FIGHT AGAINST EVIL.

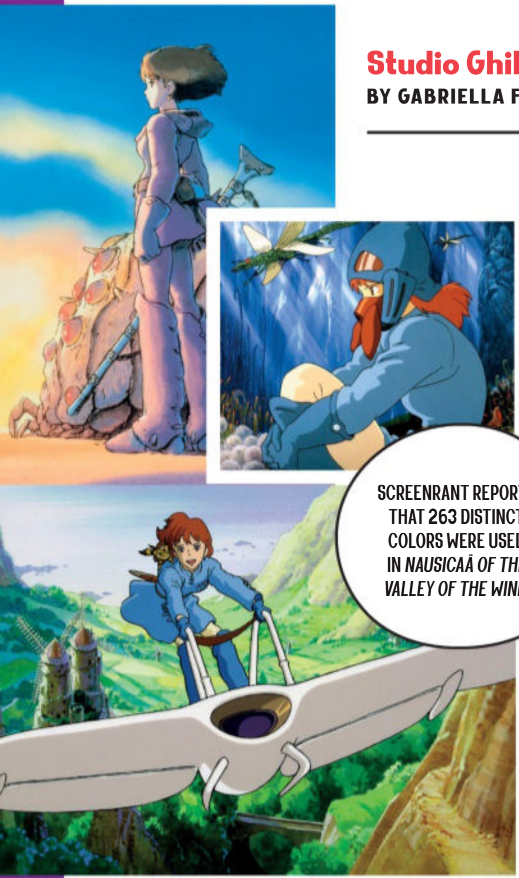


THE (MOSTLY) ADULT CHARACTERS OF *COWBOY BEBOP* HELP SET THE SHOW'S MORE MATURE TONE.

FOUNDING FATHER

Studio Ghibli's Hayao Miyazaki is still revolutionizing the medium.

BY GABRIELLA FRISCH

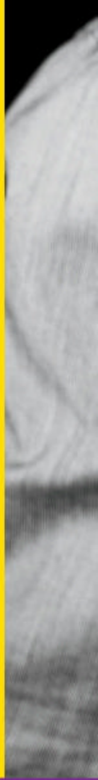


SCREENRANT REPORTS THAT 263 DISTINCT COLORS WERE USED IN *NAUSICAÄ OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND.*

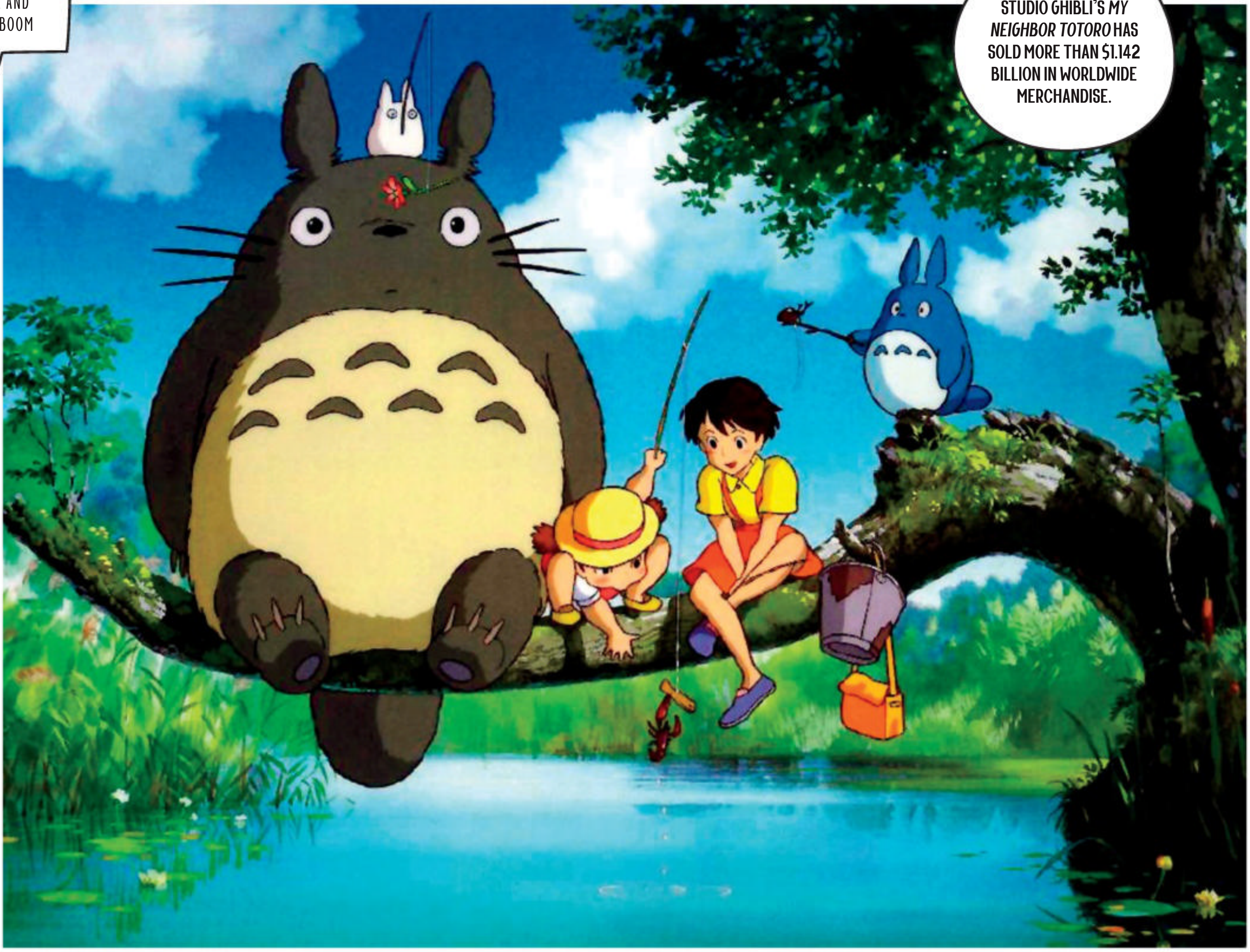
HE'S "THE GREATEST ANIMATED filmmaker since the advent of the form in the early 20th century and one of the greatest filmmakers of any genre." This bold claim about Hayao Miyazaki, the genius behind Studio Ghibli, was made by Ligaya Mishan, a writer for *The New York Times*, and it's a sentiment held by many. Miyazaki, with his pioneering artistic vision, carved out a niche in the anime world, defining an entirely new visual style.

The artist developed his illustration chops and crafted his animation style at the renowned Toei Animation studio. Miyazaki met his wife, Akemi Ota, while they were working as colleagues at Toei on the film *Gulliver's Travels Beyond the Moon*. He also founded his professional relationship with collaborator Isao Takahata during this time. Miyazaki eventually left Toei and became an established presence within the anime community following the 1984 release of his feature-length film adaptation of his own manga, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. This was the first film that Miyazaki collaborated with another longtime partner, composer Joe Hisaishi. While the film was made before the official creation of Studio Ghibli, it is often considered the first of many Ghibli classics due to its unique style and contributions by present Ghibli mainstays Miyazaki, Takahata and Hisaishi.

On June 15, 1985, writers and animators Miyazaki and Takahata came together with producer



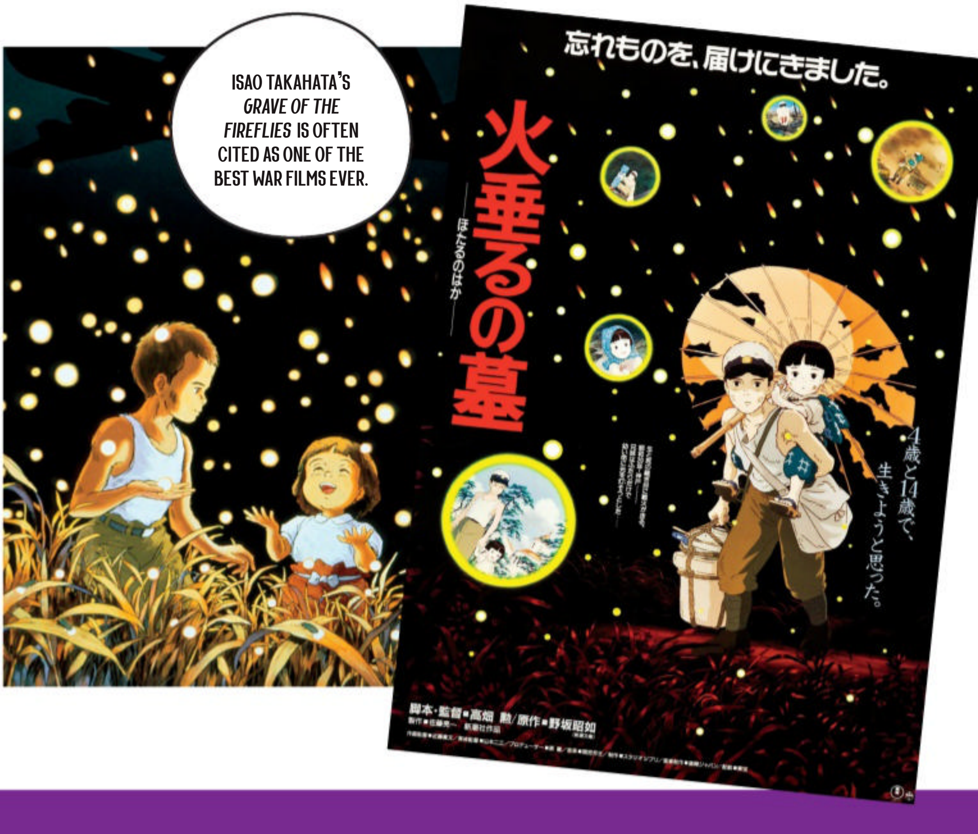
HAYAO MIYAZAKI OFTEN WRITES STORIES FEATURING STRONG WOMEN AND MORALLY GRAY CONFLICT.



STUDIO GHIBLI'S *MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO* HAS SOLD MORE THAN $1.142 BILLION IN WORLDWIDE MERCHANDISE.

Toshio Suzuki to establish Studio Ghibli. The inaugural film officially released under this new production studio was Miyazaki's *Castle in the Sky* in 1986. While *Castle in the Sky* was well received, the studio really started to gain global acclaim with 1988's *My Neighbor Totoro*. Written and directed by Miyazaki, *My Neighbor Totoro* crafts a gentle story about the friendship between two children and an enormous forest spirit creature that only they can see. In 2018, it became the first Studio Ghibli film to get a wide theatrical release in China, just in time for its 30th anniversary. And the film has gone on to gross more than $40 million worldwide.

Another standout Studio Ghibli film of the 1980s was *Grave of the Fireflies*. Directed by Takahata, Studio Ghibli's other major director, the film is an


忘れものを、届けにきました。
火垂るの墓
ほたるのはか
4歳と14歳で、生きようと思った。
脚本・監督■高畑 勲/原作■野坂昭如

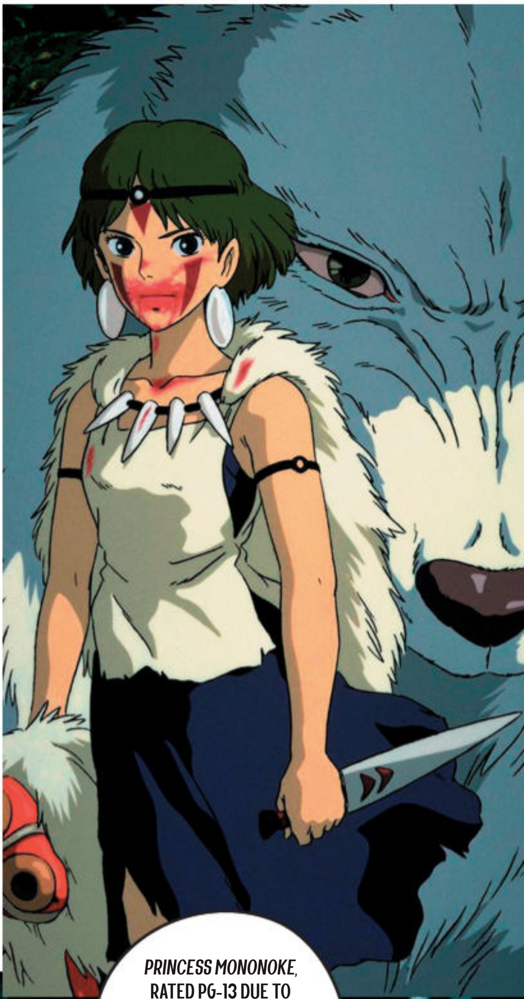
ISAO TAKAHATA'S *GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES* IS OFTEN CITED AS ONE OF THE BEST WAR FILMS EVER.

adaptation of a 1967 short story by Akiyuki Nosaka. It follows two children left homeless in the wake of an air raid. *Grave of the Fireflies* digs into Takahata's own harrowing World War II memories. While the film wasn't a commercial success, it helped to promote Studio Ghibli's versatility as both a purveyor of sunny childhood fantasies and universally engaging stories about the light and dark of humanity.

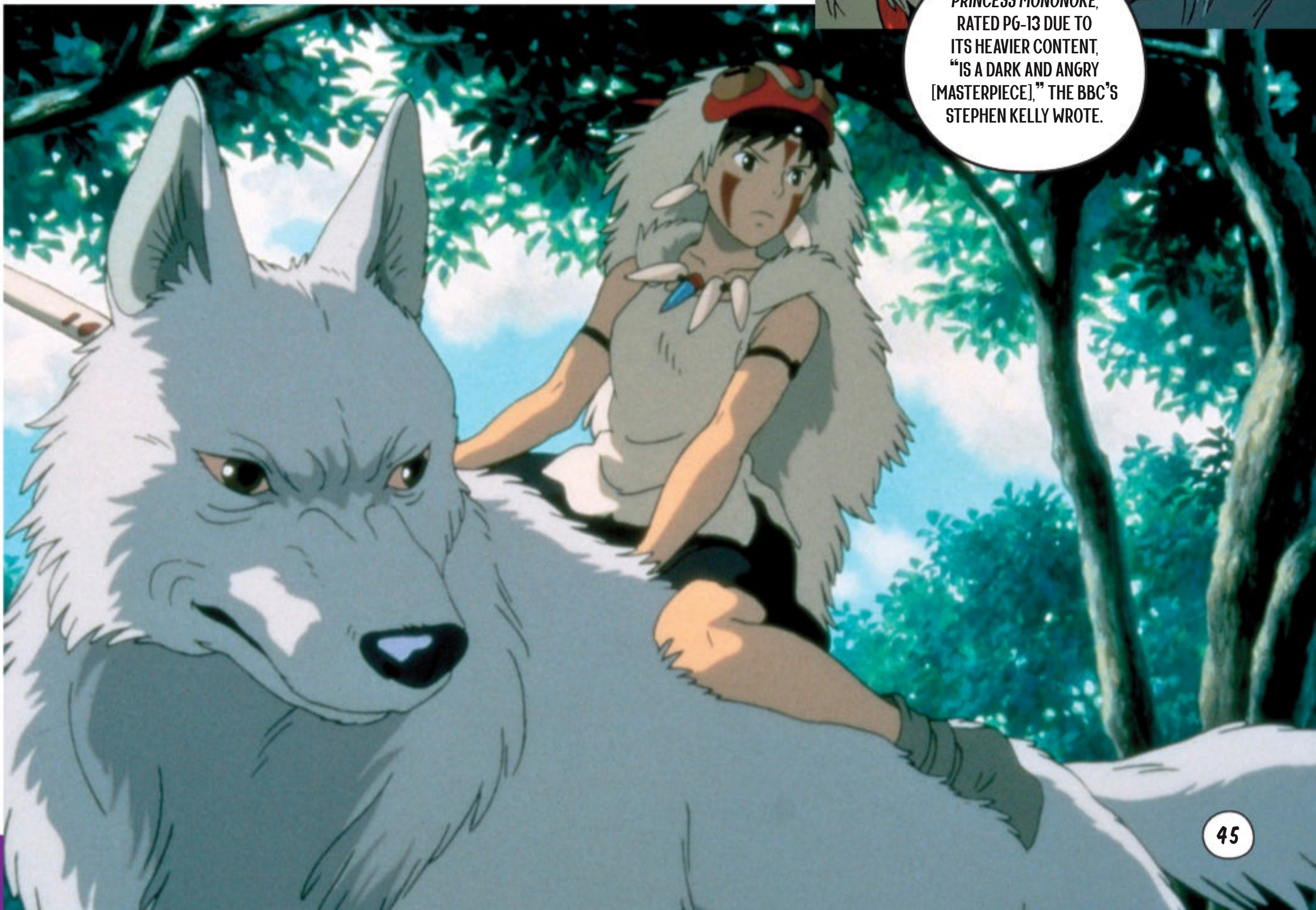
In 1996, The Walt Disney Company sought to capitalize on the multifaceted stories Studio Ghibli produced. The companies formed a partnership wherein Walt Disney Studios would be the sole international distributor for all Studio Ghibli animated films. This deal came as a result of Miyazaki's dismay at the lack of quality in the English-dubbed versions of his films conducted by Streamline Pictures. Under this agreement, Disney agreed to finance 10% of the studio's production costs, as well as redub Miyazaki's films that had been disappointingly handled by Streamline.

The addition of Disney's budgetary contribution and its use of American celebrity casts for English overdubs helped draw in Western audiences. This marketing tactic started as early as the release of *Princess Mononoke* in 1997. The ecological epic, whose titular character, a human raised by wolves, first appears sucking blood out of a wound in her wolf mother's side, features an English-dub cast led by Billy Crudup as the film's protagonist, Ashitaka. The princess, San, was voiced by Claire Danes, and the film also includes vocal performances by Gillian Anderson, Minnie Driver and Billy Bob Thornton.

In 2001, Studio Ghibli released *Spirited Away*, which became the pinnacle of their cinematic achievements and firmly pushed the studio into the cultural mainstream. The phantasmagorical fable follows the timid heroine Chihiro, who must learn bravery. Chihiro's objective is to save her parents, who have been transformed into pigs. She must work at a fantastical bathhouse that



PRINCESS MONONOKE, RATED PG-13 DUE TO ITS HEAVIER CONTENT, "IS A DARK AND ANGRY [MASTERPIECE]," THE BBC'S STEPHEN KELLY WROTE.



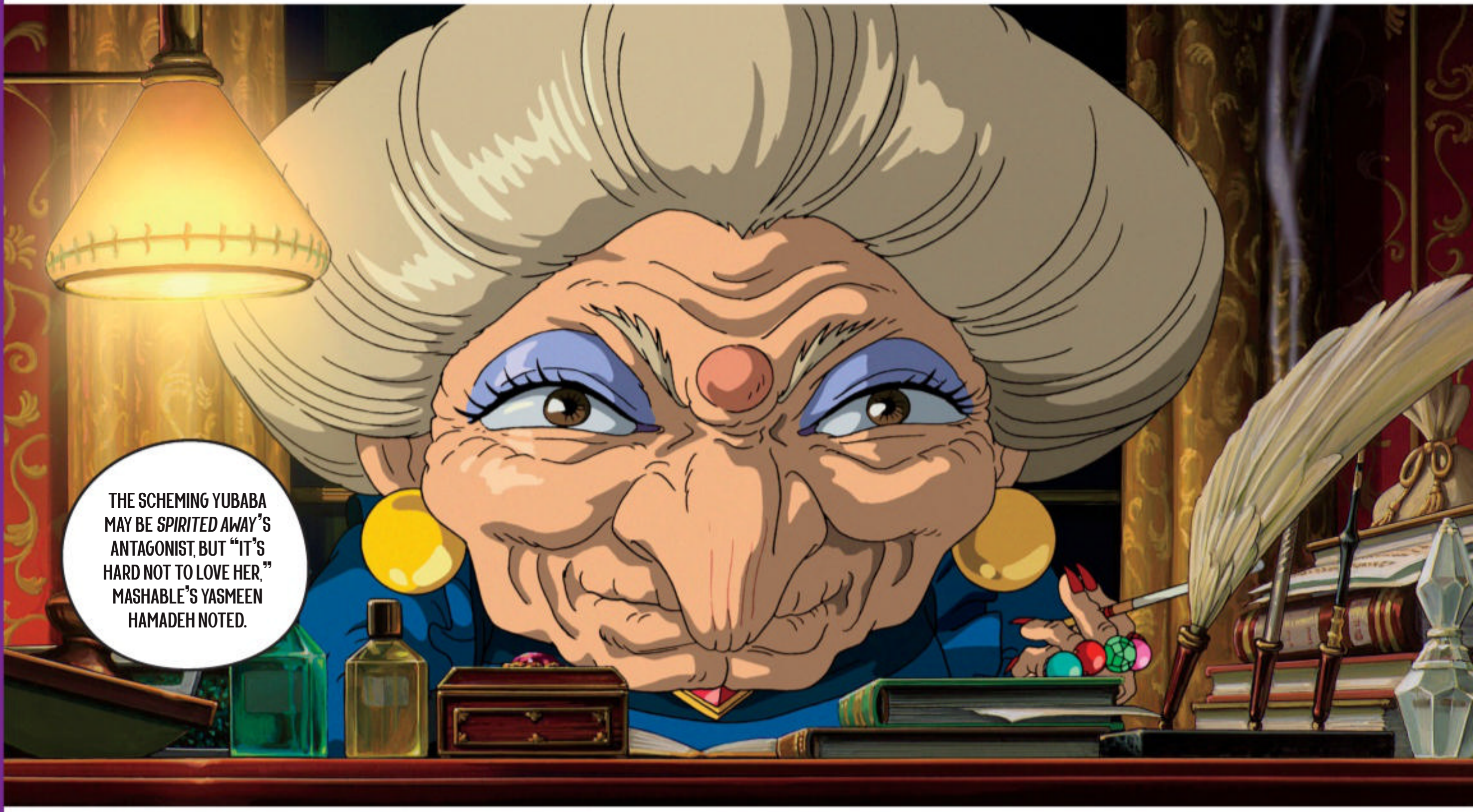
caters to a diverse array of spirits. The dreamworld portrayed in the film is rife with unimaginable magic and profoundly simple natural beauty. Peter Bradshaw of *The Guardian* lovingly describes *Spirited Away* as capturing the “fleetness and lightness” of childhood. Two decades later, *Spirited Away* arguably remains Studio Ghibli’s most recognized and celebrated film, winning the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature in 2003, and grossing more than $380 million worldwide. It still sits at No. 2 in Japan’s top 10 most successful animated films.

As animation technology developed following the turn of the 21st century, studios were inclined to utilize more cost- and time-effective methods of computer animation. Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli remained focused on keeping to the tradition of animation through hand-pencil drawings. “I believe that the tool of an animator is the pencil,” Miyazaki proudly told Mishan. The core of Miyazaki’s style is the articulation of his hand-drawn animation. Despite his mainstream animation competitors utilizing more practical and efficient computer animation, Miyazaki remained steadfast in his tradition of drawing frame by frame. His attention to detail and superhuman patience delivered films of unwavering quality, despite the changing tools of the animation world.

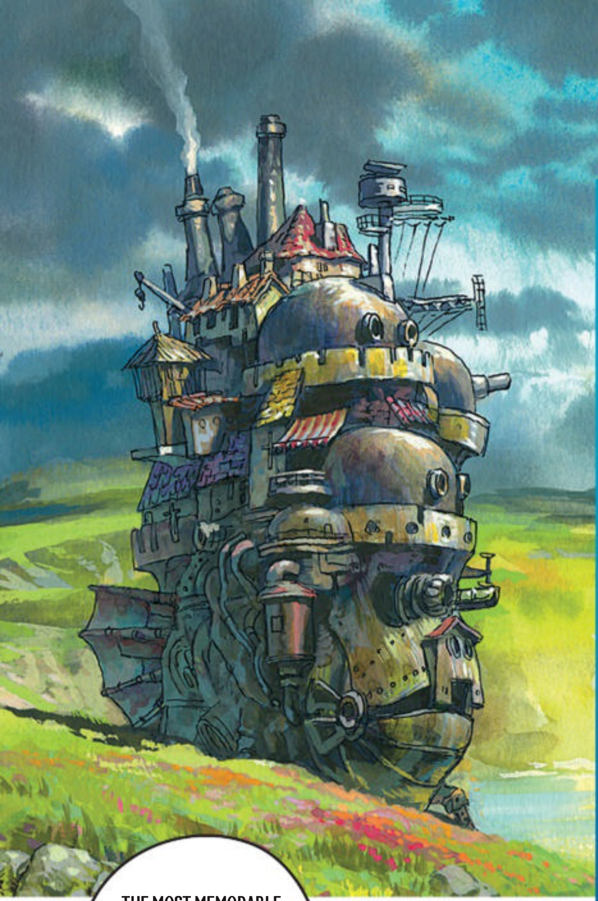
> **“IF YOU STAY TRUE TO JOY AND ASTONISHMENT AND EMPATHY YOU DON’T HAVE TO HAVE VIOLENCE…”**
>
> Hayao Miyazaki to Roger Ebert, on children’s films

Howl’s Moving Castle, released in 2004, incorporated Miyazaki’s signature process into a digital production. The original backgrounds of the film were drawn by hand and painted prior to being digitized. Characters were also drawn prior to scanning them into the computer. After digital processing, the studio chose to manually retouch the digitally altered images, making sure that the feel of hand-drawn frames still shined through the digitization process.

The English dub of *Howl’s Moving Castle* featured Christian Bale as the wizard Howl and Billy Crystal as the anthropomorphic fire Calcifer. While filling out voice casts with A-list actors is a useful marketing tactic for foreign releases, dubbing does not come without challenges. Translating the Japanese dialogue and replacing it with an English translation is one thing. Making sure



THE SCHEMING YUBABA MAY BE *SPIRITED AWAY*’S ANTAGONIST, BUT “IT’S HARD NOT TO LOVE HER,” MASHABLE’S YASMEEN HAMADEH NOTED.



THE MOST MEMORABLE CHARACTER FROM *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE* MIGHT BE THE TITULAR CASTLE ITSELF.

the spoken English lines match the actions and reactions of characters and scenes is the real challenge, requiring much time and work.

Another of the many obstacles anime-style films face on the world stage is simply overcoming cultural barriers and the trepidation of non-Japanese audiences to watch things that feel foreign. In a DVD extra for the English version of *Howl's Moving Castle*, dialogue director Pete Docter discussed how the screenwriters were "taking the original Japanese and trying to make it conversational and real and truthful while maintaining the integrity of the original."

Regardless of whether viewers watch Miyazaki's films in the original Japanese or the English-dubbed versions, they will witness thrilling adventures in which Studio Ghibli takes a lot of pride. Miyazaki's visual style brims with bright detail and a palette of saturated colors. Expressive, fantastical characters delight and enchant, setting the scene time and time again.

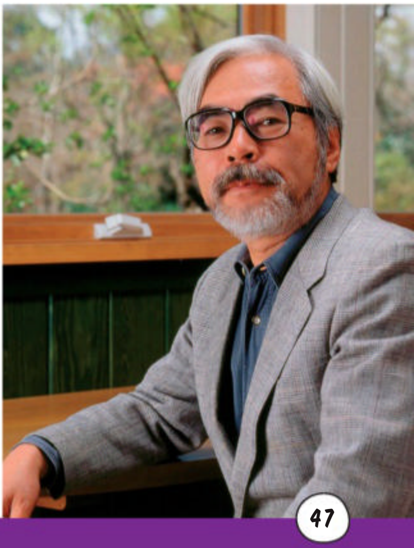
THE RELUCTANT RETIREE

Hayao Miyazaki, despite his reign as one of the greatest animators since the advent of the industry, has never sought the spotlight. Instead, Miyazaki often refuses to do interviews, and has repeatedly announced his retirement from animation and the film worlds. The first announcement came in 1998, but was abruptly ended one year later when Miyazaki returned to Studio Ghibli with the plans for *Spirited Away*. The film won the 2003 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, and is the only film from outside the West to ever do so.

After *Spirited Away*'s major success, Miyazaki completed a string of movies, culminating in his seemingly final 2013 effort, *The Wind Rises*. The film depicts the mostly true story of the designer of the Zero fighter plane, Jiro Horikoshi. Horikoshi opposed World War II and is portrayed by Miyazaki as reluctant to see the beautiful machines he's created deployed as tools for killing. *The Wind Rises* is a tribute to Japan's history, a love letter to creators, as well as a visual love letter to flying, instilled in Miyazaki from an early age by his parents. The animator's announcement that this would be his last film, having directed 11 features in 34 years, was taken seriously. Studio Ghibli subsequently shut down its production department.

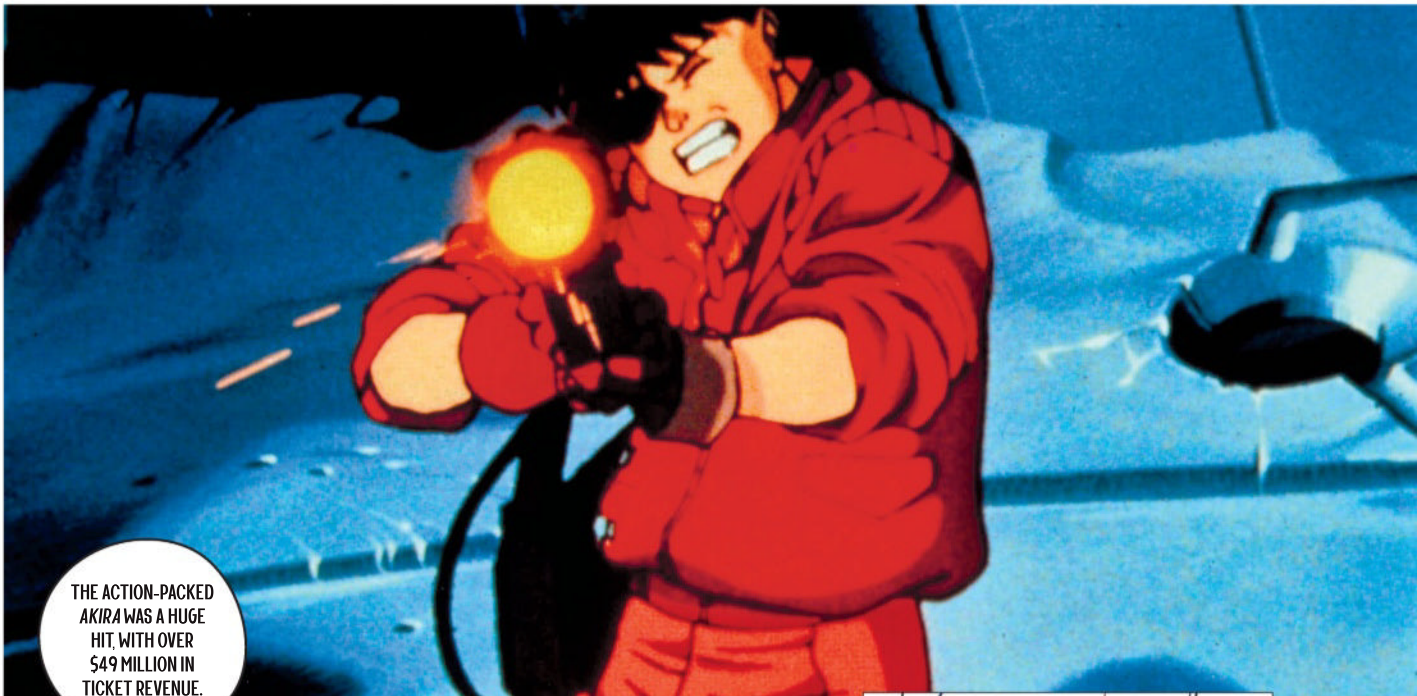
But years later in July of 2016, Miyazaki decided to break his retirement and commence animation work for his next project. As a result, Studio Ghibli reopened with many past collaborators working on the new film. In October 2017, Studio Ghibli announced the project would be titled *How Do You Live?* Miyazaki , now 82, refuses to share much about the forthcoming film, beyond the fact that it is based on a 1937 novel by Genzaburo Yoshino. The story concerns a playful 15-year-old boy in Tokyo, whose father has recently died.

Miyazaki stated that the film is not to be expected anytime soon. As of October 2019, the movie was confirmed to be 15% complete. In May 2020, producer Toshio Suzuki told *Entertainment Weekly*, "We have 60 animators, but we are only able to come up with one minute of animation in a month." After three years of production, only 36 minutes of the film had been completed. Suzuki elaborated, "We are still hand-drawing everything, but it takes us more time to complete a film because we're drawing more frames." The film, which is sure to delight audiences, is now projected to be released in 2026.

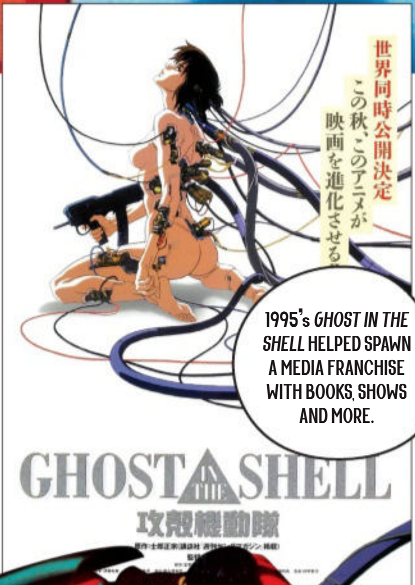


Breakout releases in the '80s, '90s and 2000s score with audiences everywhere.

A DRAW AT THE B



THE ACTION-PACKED *AKIRA* WAS A HUGE HIT, WITH OVER $49 MILLION IN TICKET REVENUE.


世界同時公開決定
この秋、このアニメが
映画を進化させる
GHOST IN THE SHELL
攻殻機動隊

1995's *GHOST IN THE SHELL* HELPED SPAWN A MEDIA FRANCHISE WITH BOOKS, SHOWS AND MORE.

THESE DAYS WHEN YOU SEE AN ANIMATED film listed at the top of the box office, it's not a surprise. Titans such as Disney's *Frozen* are some of the highest-grossing movies ever made. While Disney has been releasing hit animated films since the 1930s, the anime genre took a little longer to break into the mainstream.

Many historians, critics and journalists credit the rise of anime films to 1988's *Akira*. The most expensive anime movie of its time, *Akira* exploded internationally and served as many adult Westerners' first exposure to the genre. Writing for *The Washington Post*, reporter Hau Chu cited *Akira*'s adult tone and political setting as crucial to its box-office success. "The frenetic cyberpunk anime…showed that cartoons across cultures could address larger social issues."

Akira was hugely influential in the decades to come. Within anime itself, films such as 1995's *Ghost in the Shell* and shows such as 2004's *Elfen Lied* took liberally from *Akira*. Outside of anime, Kanye West used *Akira* as inspiration for the music video for his hit single "Stronger." *Stranger Things* directors Matt and Ross Duffer (the Duffer Brothers) cited *Akira* as a major influence during a 2017 interview with The Daily Beast.

At the same time that *Akira* exposed an international audience to the power of adult-themed anime, the more child-friendly Studio Ghibli

OX OFFICE

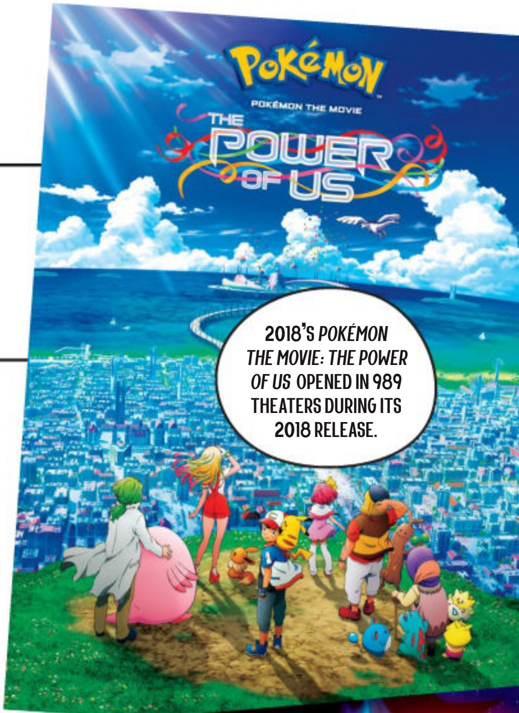
> **"MY PROCESS IS THINKING, THINKING, AND THINKING—THINKING ABOUT MY STORIES FOR A LONG TIME."**
>
> **Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli director**

was releasing iconic anime films that would go on to garner huge acclaim in the '90s and 2000s. The most famous director at Studio Ghibli, Hayao Miyazaki, directed, wrote and provided animation for 1988's *My Neighbor Totoro*, 1997's *Princess Mononoke* and 2001's Academy-Award winning *Spirited Away*. All three films were groundbreaking works of anime that shattered box-office records and cemented international demand for theatrical anime films. "Even audiences who would otherwise never consider themselves 'anime fans' more often than not find themselves enraptured by the inimitable passion and resolute humanism which define [Miyazaki's] body of work," wrote Toussaint Egan in a retrospective for *Paste* magazine.

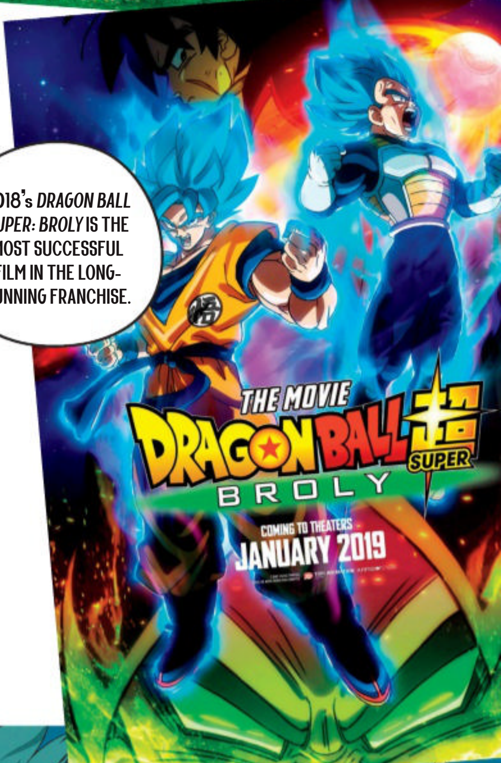
With anime feature films becoming more and more commonplace, huge franchises jumped aboard the film trend, the most notable being 1998's *Pokémon: The First Movie*. Capitalizing on the popularity of the Pokémon games and anime TV show, *Pokémon: The First Movie* went on to gross over $170 million worldwide, with nearly half of its earnings coming from outside of Japan.

Respect for individual creators such as Miyazaki as well as opportunities for studios supercharged anime film development. The next generation of star directors produced some of the most distinct and profitable anime films ever, titles such as 2006's *Paprika*, 2012's *Wolf Children* and 2016's *Your Name*. *Your Name* in particular was a box-office star, earning over $350 million, the third highest-grossing anime film ever. Its director, Makoto Shinkai, grew up watching Miyazaki's work, and thinks Miyazaki is a "genius." When asked about him in an interview with *The Guardian*, Shinkai said, "You don't want to be imitating his style…but I do want to trigger emotions like his movies triggered our emotions."

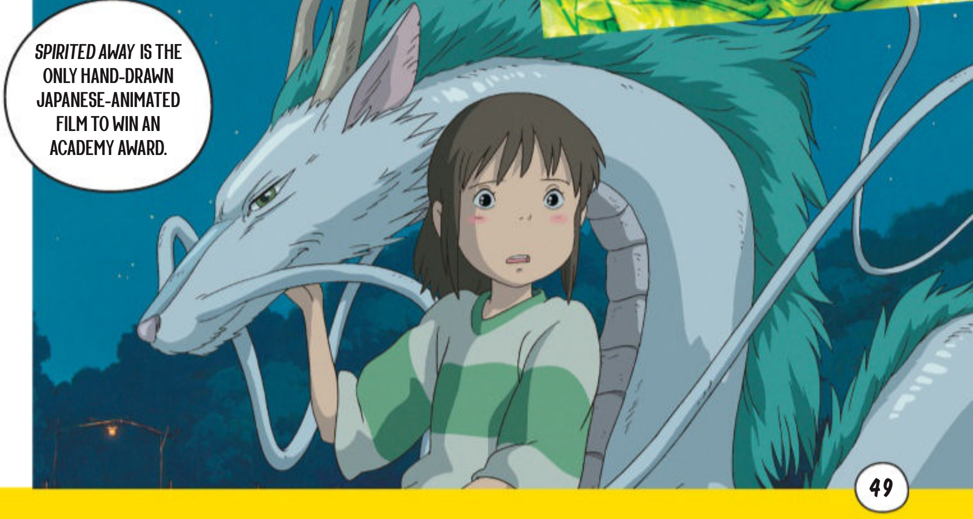
Anime films based on large franchises continue to see success, with titles such as 2018's *Dragon Ball Super: Broly*, 2020's *Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train* and 2021's *Jujutsu Kaisen 0* appealing to longtime fans and newcomers to the franchises. Today, *Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train* remains the biggest anime film ever, with a box office of over $500 million.



2018'S *POKÉMON THE MOVIE: THE POWER OF US* OPENED IN 989 THEATERS DURING ITS 2018 RELEASE.



2018's *DRAGON BALL SUPER: BROLY* IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL FILM IN THE LONG-RUNNING FRANCHISE.



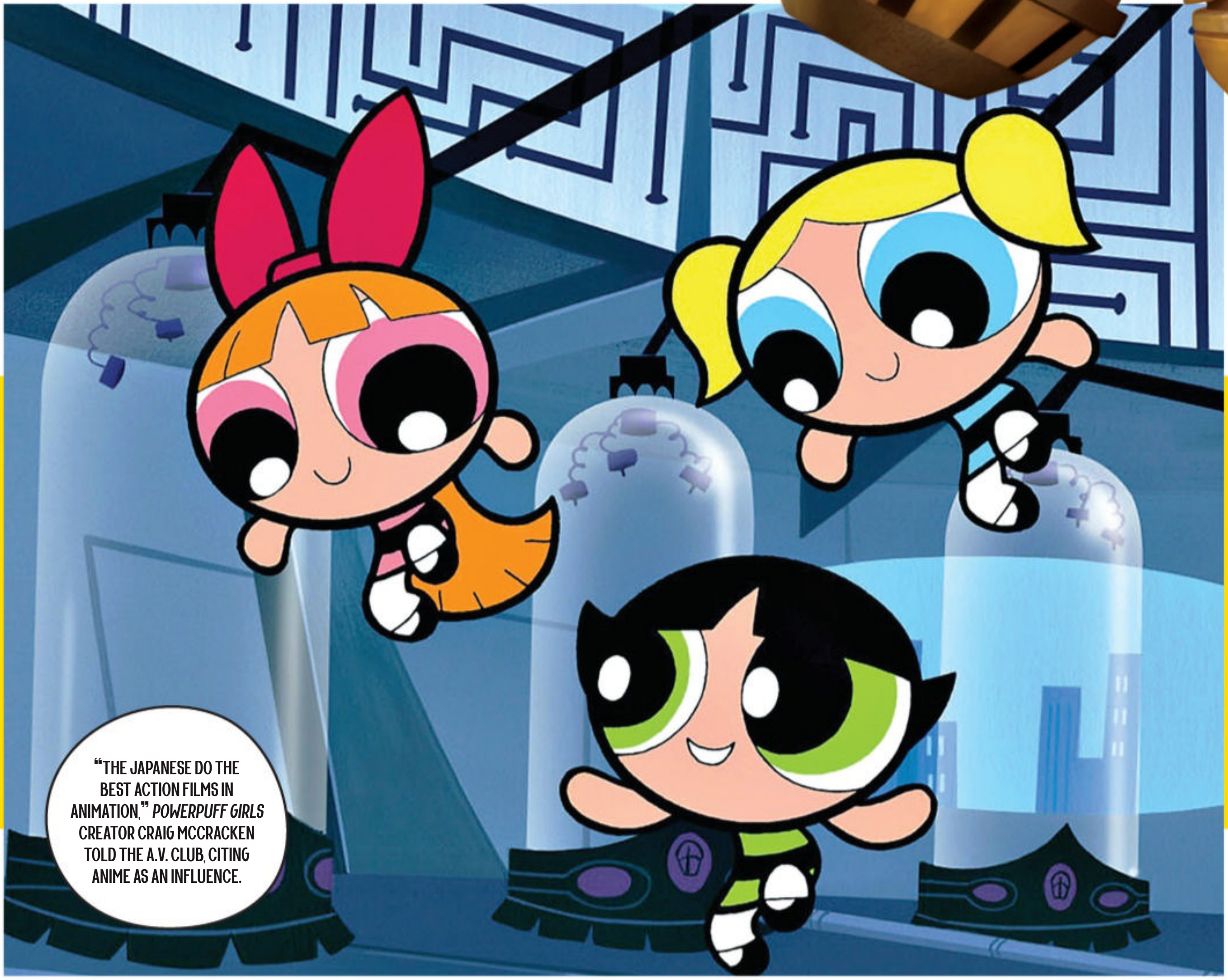
SPIRITED AWAY IS THE ONLY HAND-DRAWN JAPANESE-ANIMATED FILM TO WIN AN ACADEMY AWARD.

HOW THE EAST INFLUENCED
AMERICAN ANIMATION

An artistic cultural exchange program is still paying off.

BY NOAH PETRILLO

IN THE ENGLISH RELEASE OF 2009's *ASTRO BOY*, THE ROBOT ZOG IS VOICED BY SAMUEL L. JACKSON.



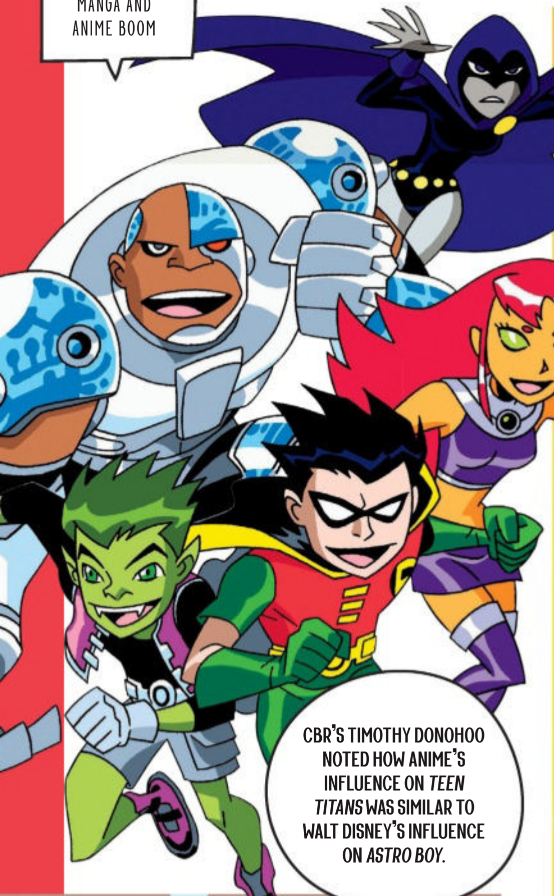
"THE JAPANESE DO THE BEST ACTION FILMS IN ANIMATION," *POWERPUFF GIRLS* CREATOR CRAIG MCCRACKEN TOLD THE A.V. CLUB, CITING ANIME AS AN INFLUENCE.

ASTRO BOY (2009) IS AN AMERICAN CG-ANIMATED FILM BASED ON THE JAPANESE SERIES.

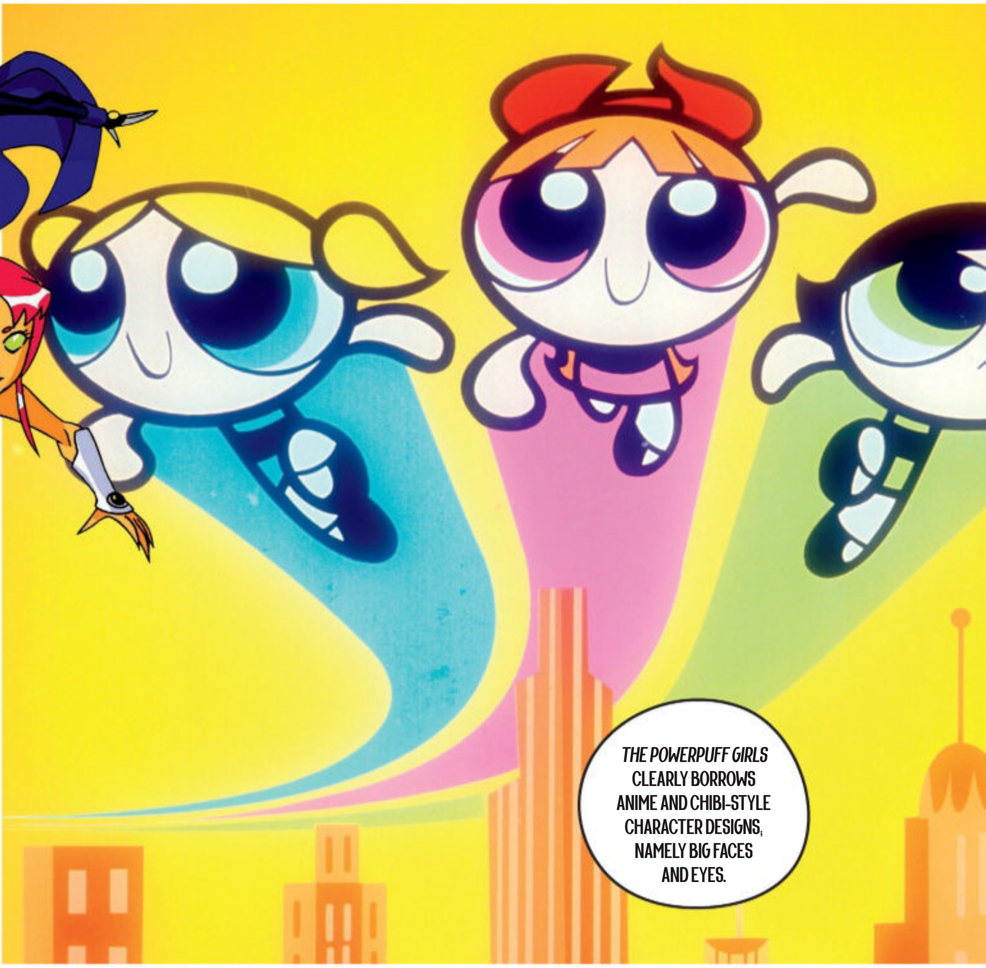
AS ANIME HAS STEADILY SOARED TO unprecedented levels of popularity, it has left an indelible mark on American animation and pop culture in general. Believe it or not, this outcome was confidently predicted in 1987 by renowned anime artist Osamu Tezuka, creator of *Astro Boy*. In a television interview shared by BetaGems Lost Media, he began by saying, "To adapt to foreign civilization, first we had to swallow it whole. And to copy was the easiest thing to do." This was in the context of manga evolving with American influence in the 1940s and '50s. Tezuka spoke of the way in which people and whole cultures, when exposed to new information, will at first imitate new influences. Given enough time, though, influences combine to inspire something new entirely. Tezuka went on to predict this for anime, saying, "In the future, Japanese creativity will be greatly respected and even, I think, widely used." He couldn't have been more right.

By the late 1980s, anime had exploded in Japan and by the late '90s, it was pouring into American TV networks and movie theaters. One of the most popular purveyors of anime content in America was Toonami. Part of Cartoon Network's weekly broadcast starting in 1997, Toonami was intended to be, in the words of YouTuber Kaptain Kristian, "A cultural gatekeeper to oversee a library too large to sift through alone." In an interview with Vulture, Toonami producer Jason DeMarco said, "We wanted it to represent all of what we thought was exciting about youth culture at the time. And in a way that didn't talk down to kids." He went on to describe how Toonami became associated with anime. "It wasn't until *Dragon Ball Z* and *Sailor Moon* really popped, then it became slightly more focused on anime." The passionate and respectful treatment of the anime series allowed American audiences of all ages to fall in love with the medium.

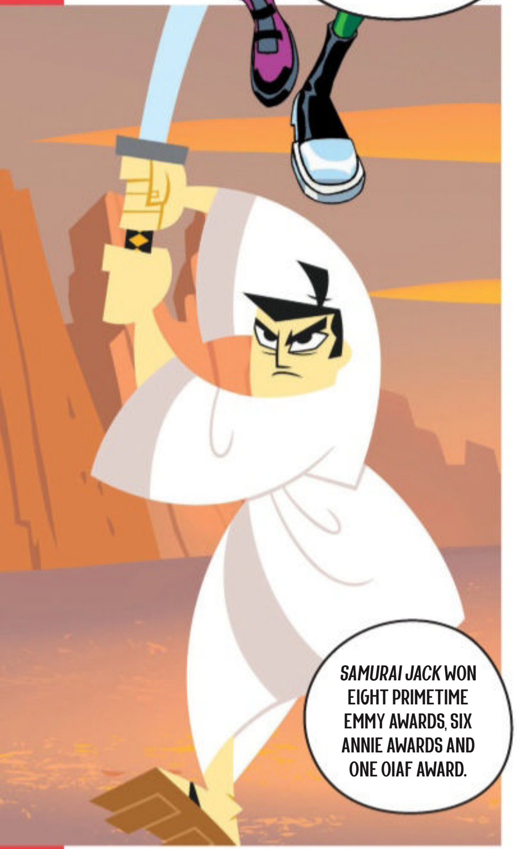
Even the older hits on Toonami, such as *Voltron*, *Thundercats* and *Robotech*, were clearly inspired by anime. *Robotech* was even created from combining pre-existing anime. Later shows offered more opportunities for U.S. animators



CBR'S TIMOTHY DONOHOO NOTED HOW ANIME'S INFLUENCE ON *TEEN TITANS* WAS SIMILAR TO WALT DISNEY'S INFLUENCE ON *ASTRO BOY*.



THE POWERPUFF GIRLS CLEARLY BORROWS ANIME AND CHIBI-STYLE CHARACTER DESIGNS, NAMELY BIG FACES AND EYES.



SAMURAI JACK WON EIGHT PRIMETIME EMMY AWARDS, SIX ANNIE AWARDS AND ONE OIAF AWARD.

to combine their love of classic, cartoony American animation like *Bugs Bunny* with their love of action-packed Japanese classics, such as the widely influential *The Little Prince* and *Orochi, the Eight-Headed Dragon*. Genndy Tartakovsky, creator of the iconic and anime-inspired show *Samurai Jack*, remarked on this in an interview with SyFy Wire: "All my action principles are very similar to my cartoony principles, because all the poses want to be really strong.... Everything started to melt together."

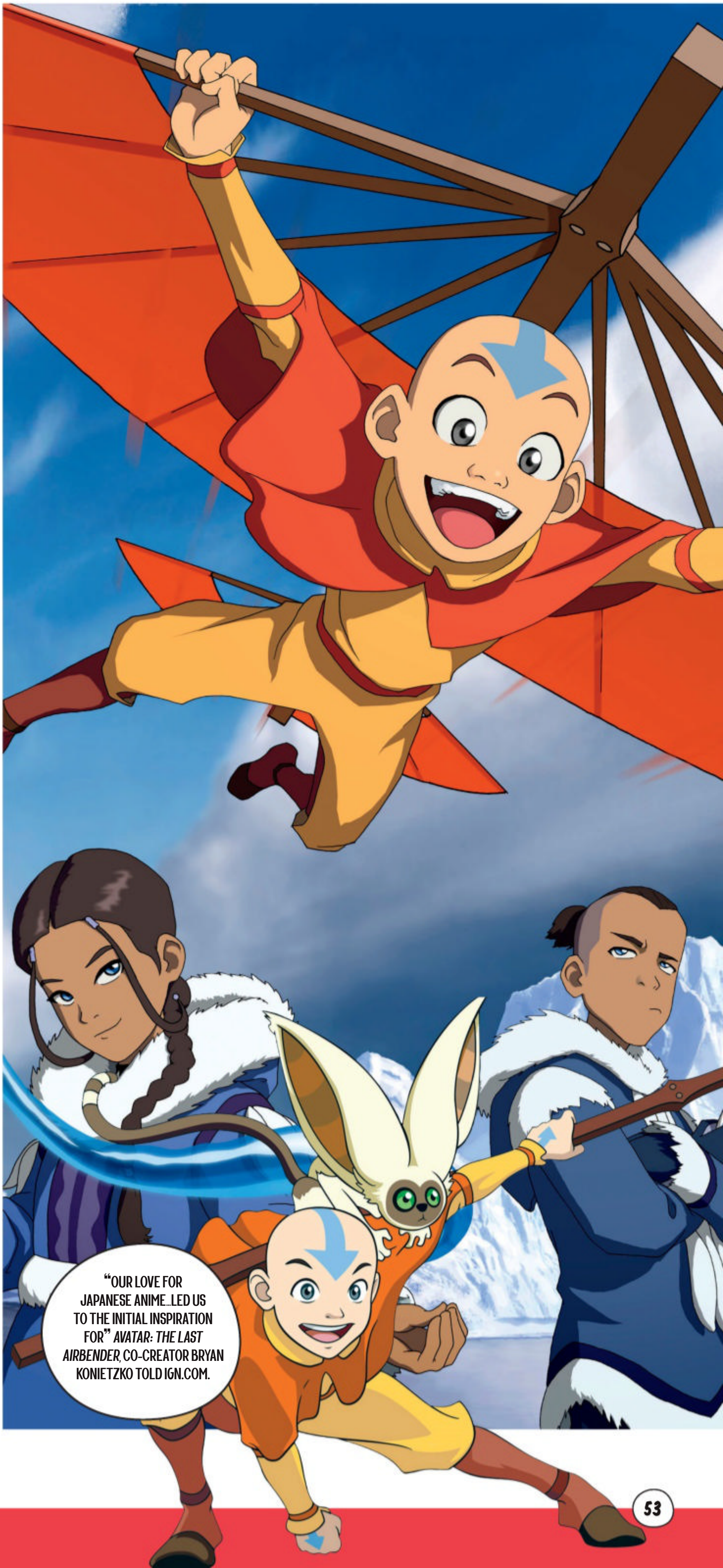
Anime's influence in America was perhaps more obvious on television than in film in the '90s and the 2000s. During this time, the line between "anime" and "animation" began to blur, especially on Cartoon Network. Shows such as *The Powerpuff Girls* and especially *Teen Titans* combined a more Japanese animation style with the classic stories of beloved American comic book characters. After all, as Samuel Edwards of Inspired Traveler points out, "Anime is a Japanese word, and thus, Western audiences often use it for Japan's animation work. Meanwhile, the Japanese use the word anime for all types of animations." So, while some define anime as a distinct visual style of Japanese animation (bold outlines, big eyes, big hair, etc.), those indicators have made their way into American animation. Subsequently, American and Japanese art forms have arguably created a new era of animation, as well as a deeper level of storytelling.

This melting together of styles continued with Nickelodeon's recently revived favorite, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Created by

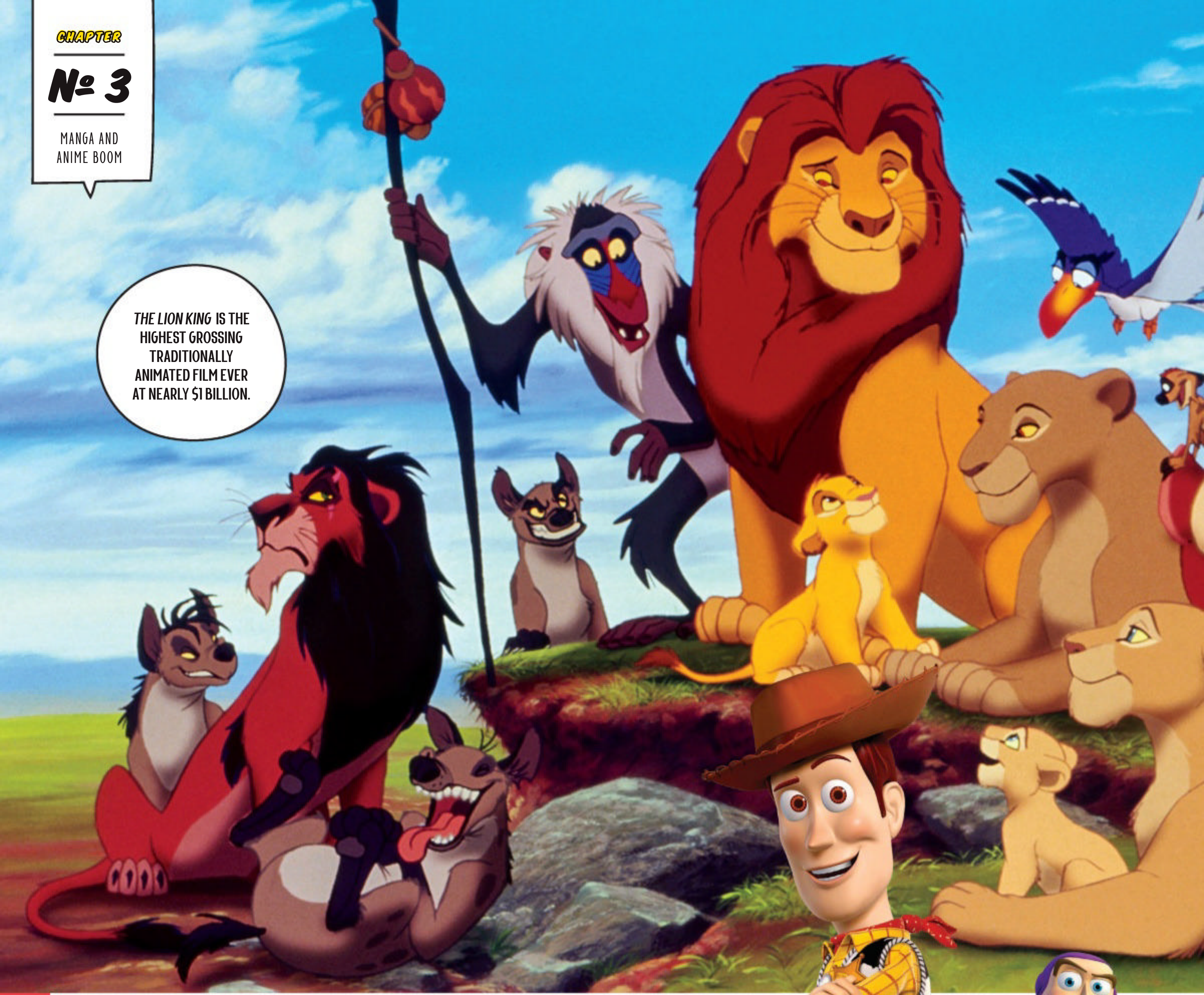
Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko, this show is, according to Vox writer Aja Romano, “One of the greatest TV shows ever made,” anime, animated or otherwise. The show boasts a nearly unheard of 100% critics approval on Rotten Tomatoes, as well as a superb 9.3 on IMDB. The show draws inspiration from anime classics as well as movies and philosophy from all over the world. Its recent release on Netflix brought it back into the forefront of pop culture, reminding everyone of its singular brilliance. *Avatar: The Last Airbender*’s massive, world-traversing story echoes the likes of *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* while teaching universal life lessons. From an animation standpoint, the show draws character influence from Hayao Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* as well as some of the movement styles of anime such as *Cowboy Bebop* and *Samurai Champloo*. The fighting styles largely draw from Chinese action films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Aside from its stellar animation, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*’s writing propelled it to prominence. Legendary actor Mark Hamill, who voiced Firelord Ozai in the show, said in an interview with Rotten Tomatoes, “I thought, ‘This thing’s not gonna last because it’s too smart, it’s too intellectual.’ But I got a lot of feedback from parents who watched it with their kids and loved it. That’s the best, when you can be a part of something that the whole family can enjoy. And that was mainly due to the writing.”

In the film industry, anime and its influence on Western productions hit a stumbling block in the form of computer-generated (CG) animation. Computer-generated graphics were just starting in the ’80s and ’90s. The critically acclaimed anime film *Akira* (1988) helped pioneer a hybrid method of traditional (hand-drawn) animation and using CG to “add small but



“OUR LOVE FOR JAPANESE ANIME…LED US TO THE INITIAL INSPIRATION FOR” *AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER*, CO-CREATOR BRYAN KONIETZKO TOLD IGN.COM.

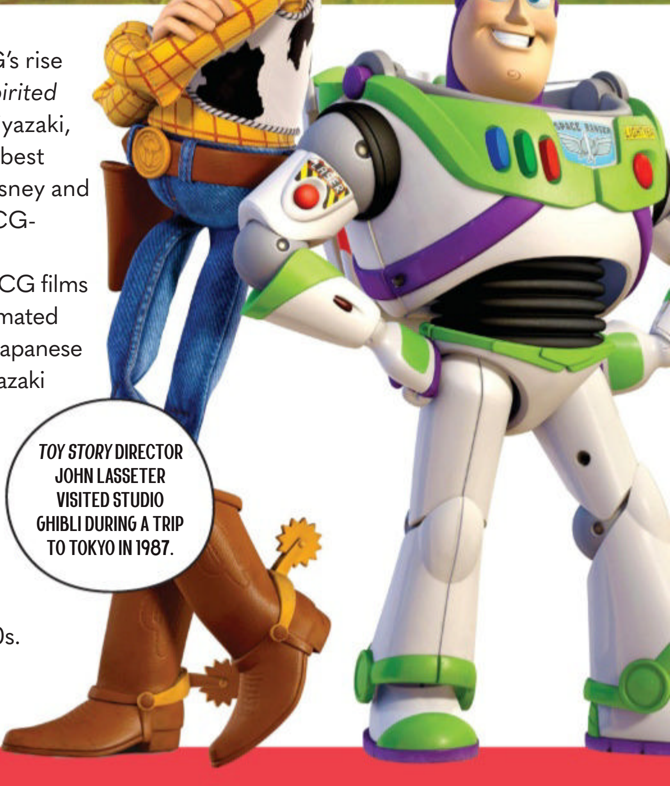


THE LION KING IS THE HIGHEST GROSSING TRADITIONALLY ANIMATED FILM EVER AT NEARLY $1 BILLION.

important details to the film," according to Karla Clark of Fandom. Disney then started experimenting with hybrid animation in their "golden age" of animated films including *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and *The Lion King* (1994). Dreamworks' *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) is also a shining example of hybrid animation. During this time, anime and American animation were in a state of mutual feedback and inspiration.

But as CG advanced, studios such as Pixar championed a totally CG approach with classics like *Toy Story* and *A Bug's Life*. Japanese anime pioneers such as Studio Ghibli and Miyazaki continued to favor hand-drawn animation, despite CG's rise to prominence. Even after *Spirited Away*, a magnum opus for Miyazaki, won the Academy Award for best animated feature in 2003, Disney and Pixar both headed toward a CG-animated future.

This split between Western CG films and Japanese hand-drawn animated ones continued for decades. Japanese anime filmmakers such as Miyazaki and the brilliant Satoshi Kon stuck to the traditional, hand-drawn approach. But in doing so, figures like Kon had an unexpected influence not on Disney or Pixar, but on a number of award-winning Hollywood movies of the 2000s.



TOY STORY DIRECTOR JOHN LASSETER VISITED STUDIO GHIBLI DURING A TRIP TO TOKYO IN 1987.

Perfect Blue, Kon's 1997 chilling meditation on fame, went on to inspire Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan* (2010) both conceptually and visually. Aronofsky also adapts visuals from *Perfect Blue* in 2000's *Requiem for a Dream*. Kon's 2006 film *Paprika* has nearly identical story elements to Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2010), which centers around the creation of a device that allows people to enter each other's dreams, then that device is stolen, resulting in a breakdown of reality from using it. *Inception* also adapts visuals directly from *Paprika*.

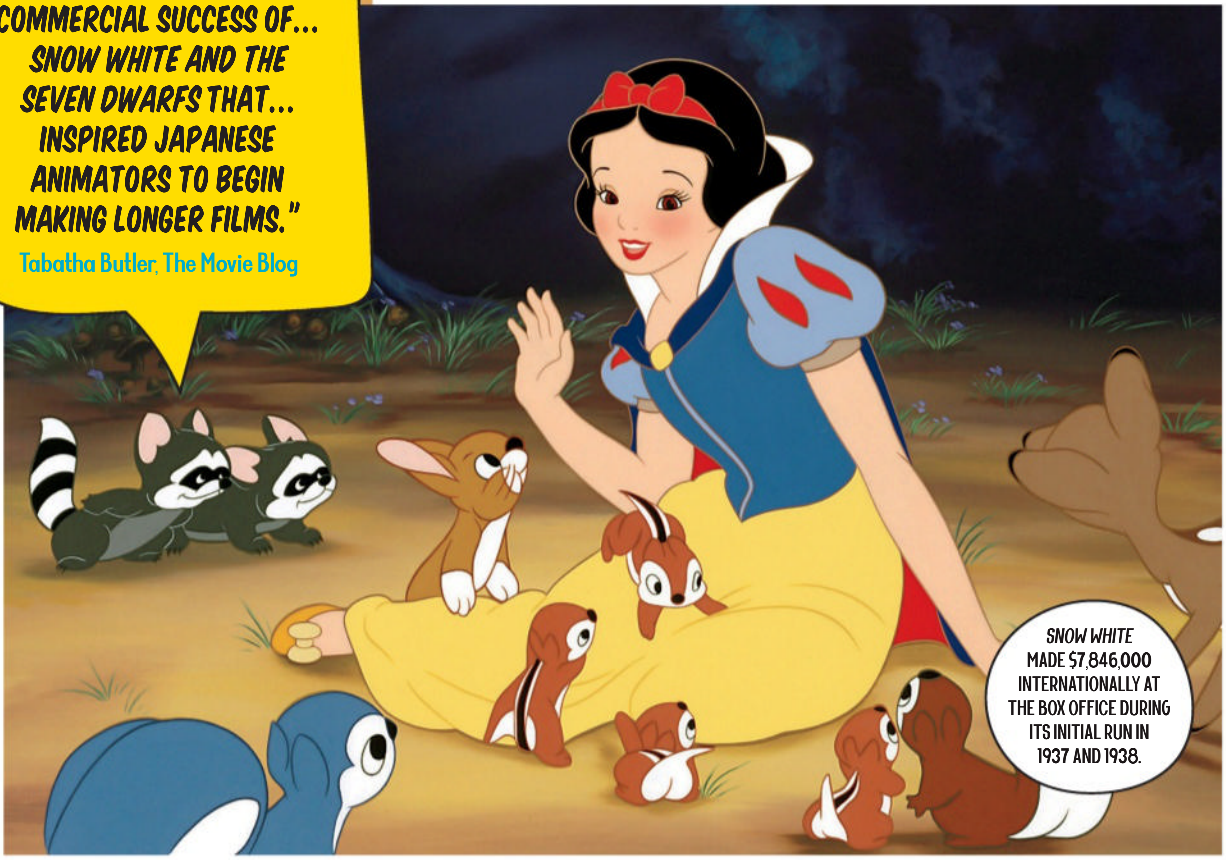
Dozens of viral videos on Reddit and TikTok show how anime films inspired Hollywood releases. Examples include visuals of 1995's *Ghost in the Shell* being used in 1999's *The Matrix,* as well as Disney's *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) recreating images from 1997's *Princess Mononoke*. It's clear that hand-drawn anime not only continually inspire American animators and productions, but these shows' and movies' visuals were far ahead of their time.

Today, animation isn't strictly CG or hand-drawn, but made with a melting pot of techniques and traditions. No example proves this better than Netflix's *Arcane*, which premiered in 2021. Based on the video game League of Legends, the show tells a fresh story that requires no knowledge of the game, and it displays a gorgeous and fresh blend of hand-drawn and CG animation inspired by anime and American animation alike.

Artistic influence is a two-way street with no other traffic laws. Artists, countries and cultures are constantly being exposed to one another, imitating one another, learning from one another, swapping stories and changing one another. Seeing this endless dance through the lens of animation is a treat for the entire world, and propels the medium forward so that new innovations are always on the horizon.

"IT WAS THE OVERWHELMING COMMERCIAL SUCCESS OF... *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS* THAT... INSPIRED JAPANESE ANIMATORS TO BEGIN MAKING LONGER FILMS."

Tabatha Butler, The Movie Blog



SNOW WHITE MADE $7,846,000 INTERNATIONALLY AT THE BOX OFFICE DURING ITS INITIAL RUN IN 1937 AND 1938.

15 ESSENTIAL ANIME SERIES

Colorful animation, thrilling action, romance, laughs and more—this carefully curated list has it all!

TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT ANIME TO START WATCHING can be just as painful as aimlessly scrolling through your Netflix queue. Luckily, we're here to recommend the classics, some fan favorites, plus a few newer hits that make up the must-see TV of the anime world. Some of these titles are original video animation (OVA), while others are based on long-running manga series that translate perfectly to the screen. Read on, grab some snacks and start watching!

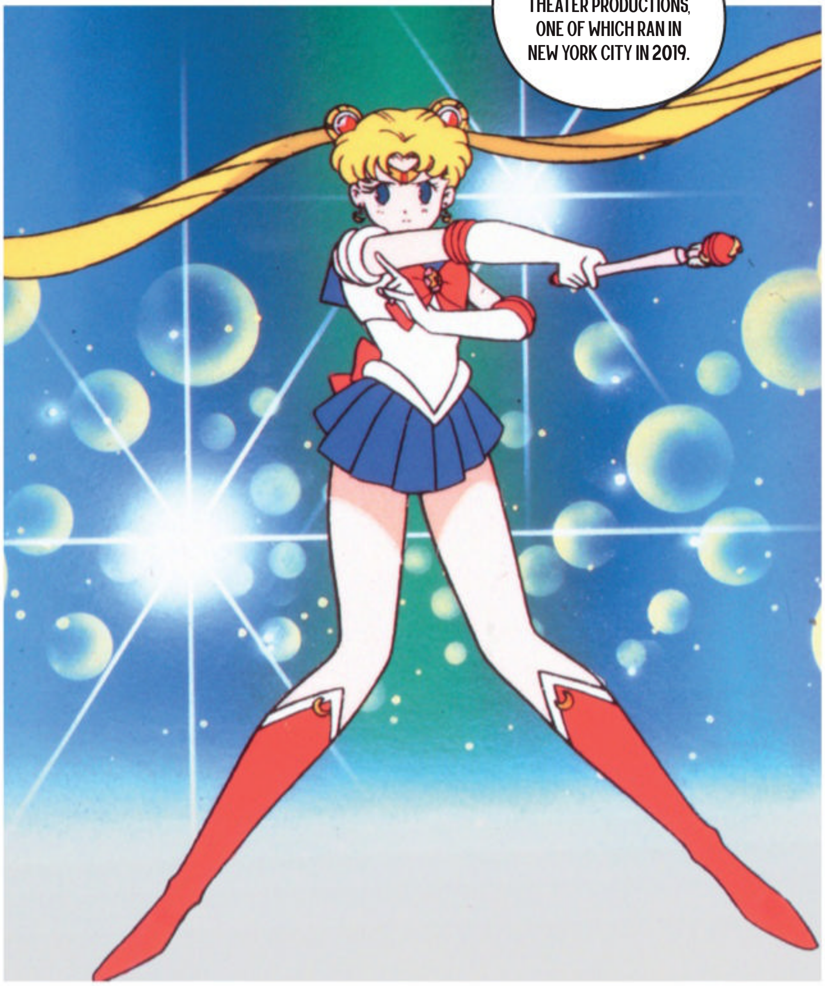
SAILOR MOON

1992-1997

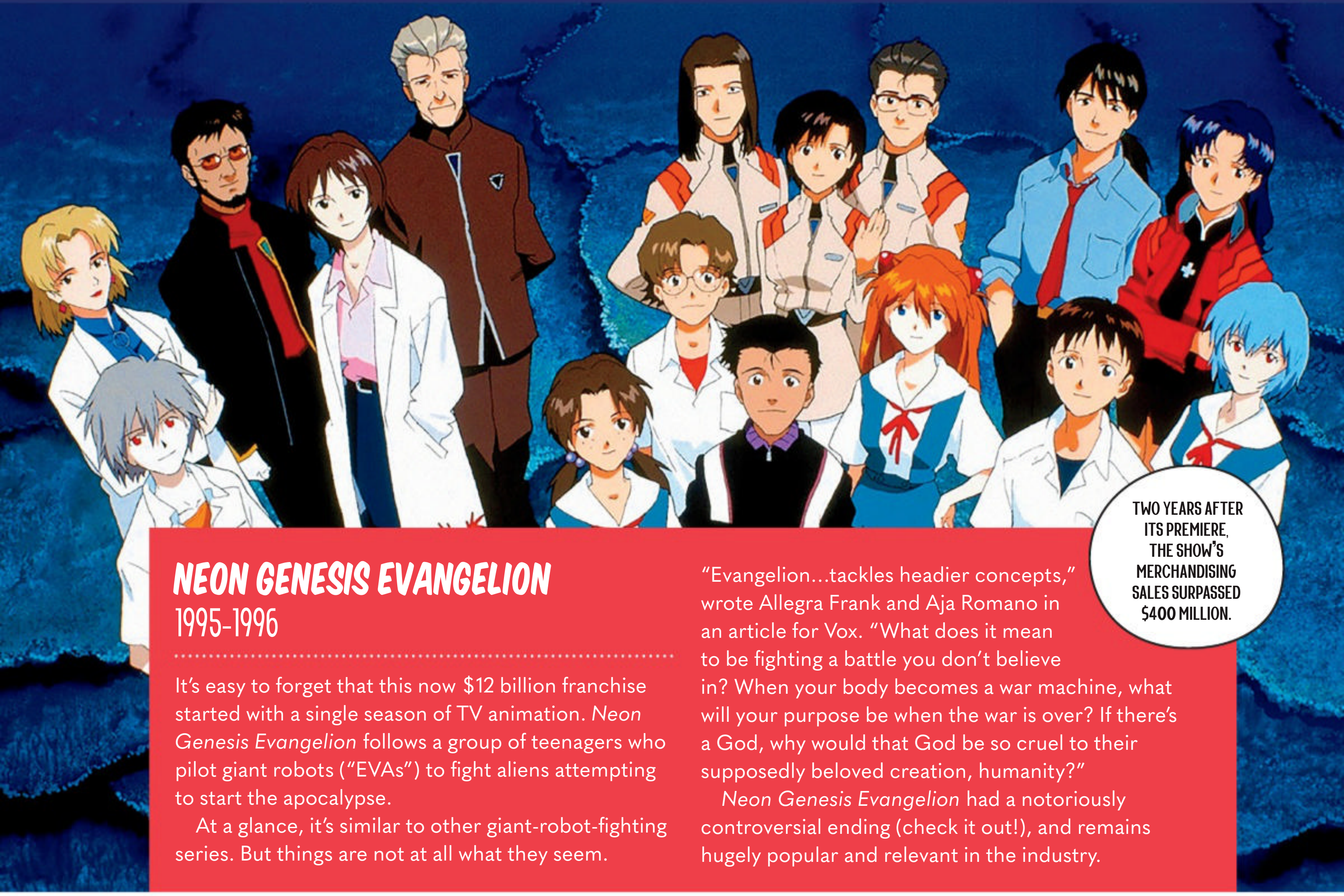
This winner is about a team of superheroine teenagers tasked with defending the world from evil. Protagonist Usagi Tsukino's day-to-day life is relatable, filled with school drama, dreamy love interests and everyday struggles. But when faced with supernatural danger, Usagi, alongside the other Sailor Soldiers, battles malevolent villains.

"The series not only served as the blueprint for the many Japanese magical girl anime series that would follow it, but also established a visual aesthetic so iconic, we see references, parodies and direct homages to the series throughout various Western television series," said Priyanka Bose in a retrospective for The A.V. Club.

Sailor Moon was a huge step forward for strong female characters in anime, something the '90s severely lacked. It also tackled themes not common in anime at the time, giving love, empathy, femininity and gender identity just as much narrative weight as fights with the bad guys.



THE SERIES INSPIRED SEVERAL MUSICAL THEATER PRODUCTIONS, ONE OF WHICH RAN IN NEW YORK CITY IN 2019.



NEON GENESIS EVANGELION
1995-1996

It's easy to forget that this now $12 billion franchise started with a single season of TV animation. *Neon Genesis Evangelion* follows a group of teenagers who pilot giant robots ("EVAs") to fight aliens attempting to start the apocalypse.

At a glance, it's similar to other giant-robot-fighting series. But things are not at all what they seem.

"Evangelion…tackles headier concepts," wrote Allegra Frank and Aja Romano in an article for Vox. "What does it mean to be fighting a battle you don't believe in? When your body becomes a war machine, what will your purpose be when the war is over? If there's a God, why would that God be so cruel to their supposedly beloved creation, humanity?"

Neon Genesis Evangelion had a notoriously controversial ending (check it out!), and remains hugely popular and relevant in the industry.

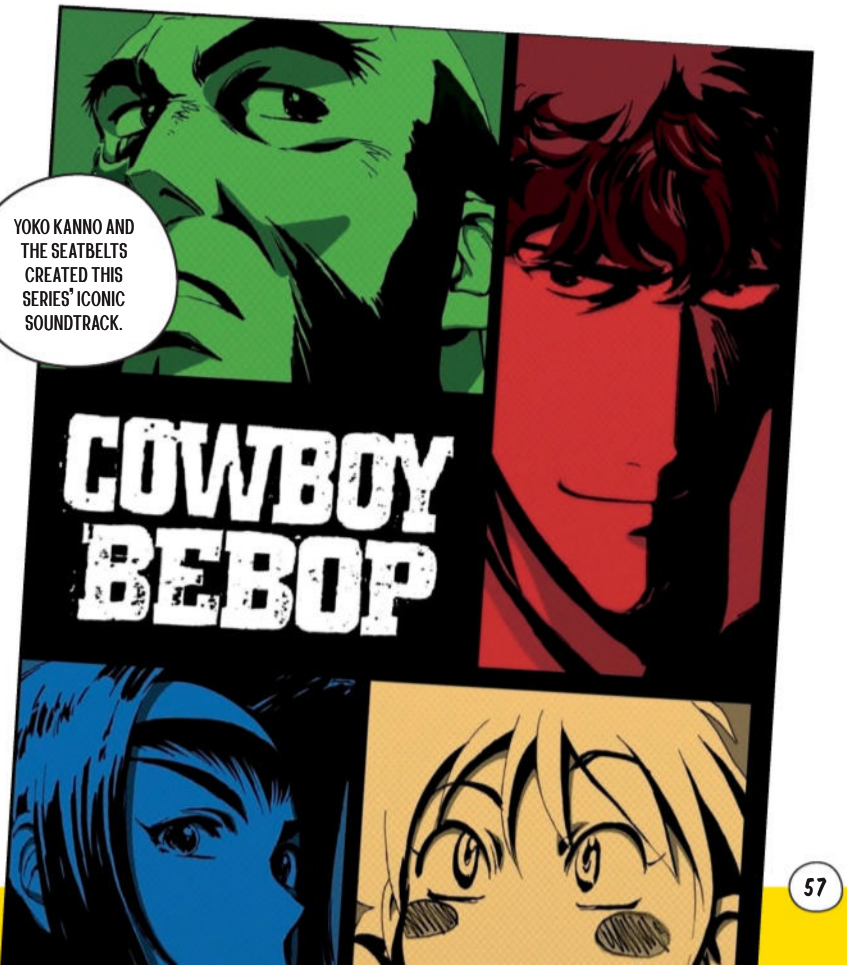
TWO YEARS AFTER ITS PREMIERE, THE SHOW'S MERCHANDISING SALES SURPASSED $400 MILLION.

COWBOY BEBOP 1998-1999

This series is often called the "gateway" anime, one so exceptional and accessible that it turns skeptics of the medium into die-hard fans. The story takes place in the year 2071, and follows a group of bounty hunters who explore the solar system in search of their next big paycheck. The series is beloved for its grown-up presentation, episodic format, amazing English voice cast, stellar animation and iconic jazz fusion soundtrack.

"[Cowboy] *Bebop* may take place in fantastical locations, but every character is grounded in human emotion," wrote Alex Suskind in *The Atlantic*. "That's one of the driving forces behind its legend, and why that legend has grown exponentially in the last 15 years."

YOKO KANNO AND THE SEATBELTS CREATED THIS SERIES' ICONIC SOUNDTRACK.

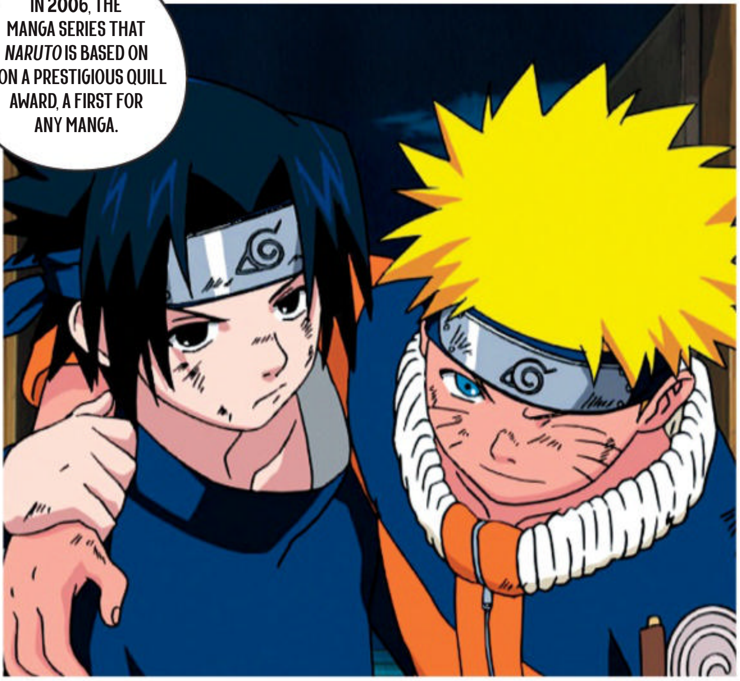


NARUTO 2002-2007

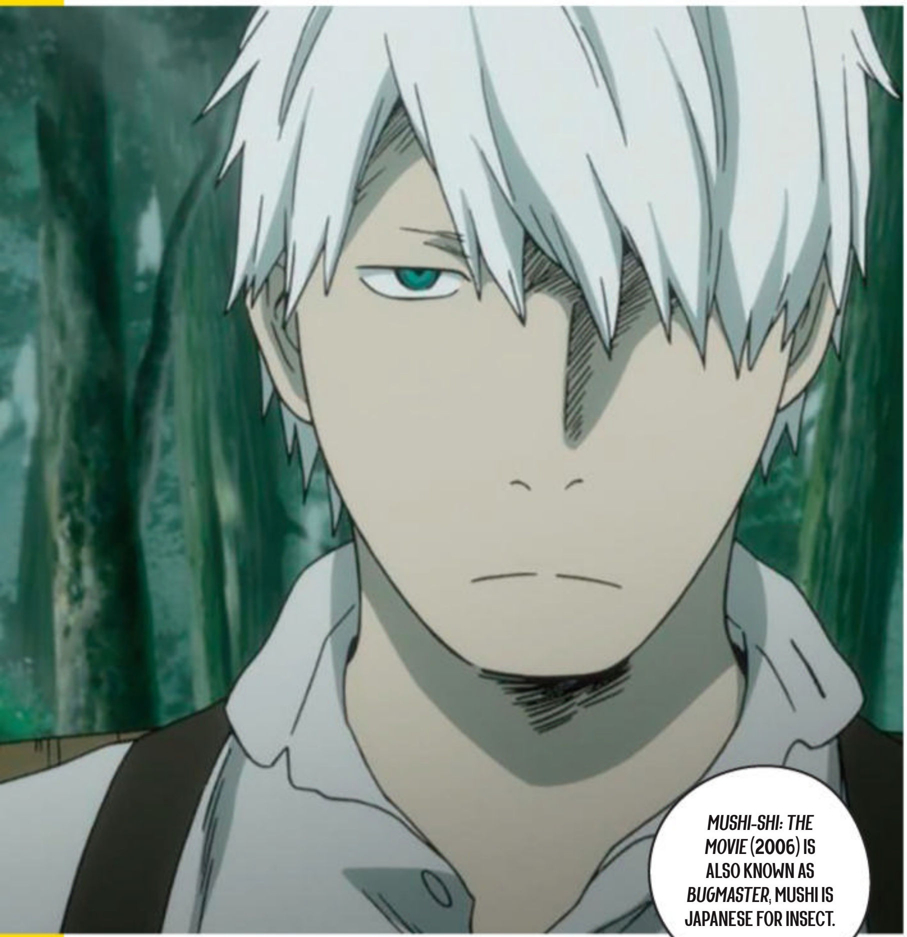
NARUTO: SHIPPUDEN 2007-2017

The super-popular shonen series stars Naruto Uzumaki, a braggadocious teen who aspires to become the leader of his village by becoming a powerful ninja. Ninjas in *Naruto* are less black-clad assassins and more supernatural fighters, with abilities that fuse high-flying martial arts and magical powers. A melting pot of influences is part of *Naruto*'s appeal. Everything about its world, from its setting to its superpowered characters, takes inspiration from Eastern legends, traditions and mythology.

But everything always comes back to the titular Naruto, who captured the hearts and minds of millions of fans across the world. "Naruto feels inferior to his peers, but he hates to be a loser," said series creator Masashi Kishimoto in a 2008 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*. "I think readers see themselves in Naruto...and that's what appeals to them: They can empathize with him and his weaknesses."



IN 2006, THE MANGA SERIES THAT *NARUTO* IS BASED ON WON A PRESTIGIOUS QUILL AWARD, A FIRST FOR ANY MANGA.



MUSHI-SHI: THE MOVIE (2006) IS ALSO KNOWN AS *BUGMASTER*. MUSHI IS JAPANESE FOR INSECT.

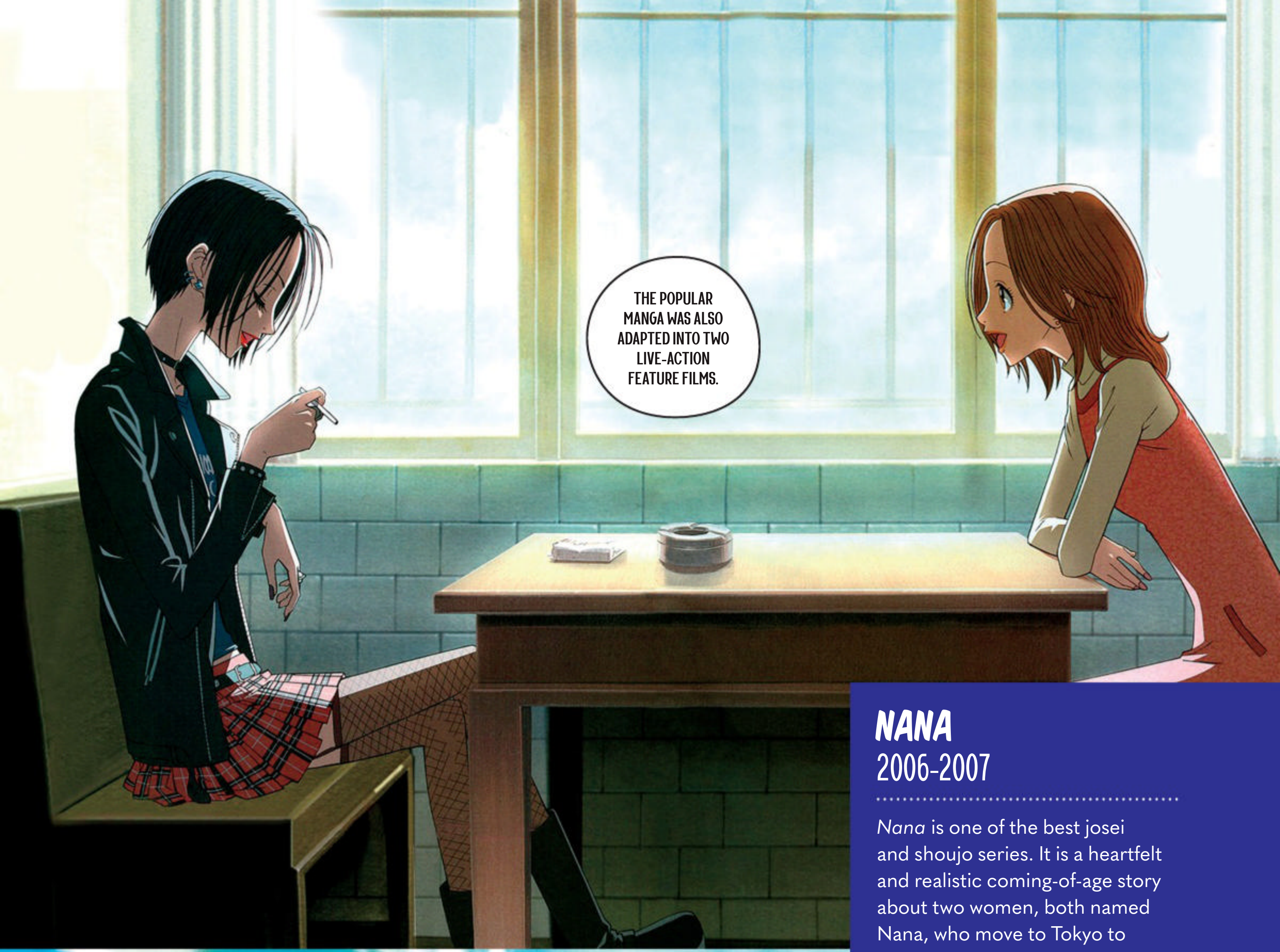
MUSHISHI 2005-2006

MUSHISHI: NEXT PASSAGE 2014-2015

This award-winning seinen title is much more meditative than the rest of the series on our list. Set in a fictitious version of 1800s Japan, *Mushishi* follows the journey of Ginko, a traveling "Mushi-shi" who solves mysteries and illnesses caused by illusive spirit creatures called Mushi.

The series is concerned not with plot twists and fight scenes, but biology and nature—the nature of people, animals, plants, ecosystems and Mushi themselves. Each episode is almost entirely self-contained, making this anthology-esque series easy to start and stop at your leisure.

"Like many fairy tales, there is a hardness to the lessons at the heart of each bittersweet story [in *Mushishi*]," said Joe O'Connell for the popular anime YouTube channel Beyond Ghibli.



THE POPULAR MANGA WAS ALSO ADAPTED INTO TWO LIVE-ACTION FEATURE FILMS.

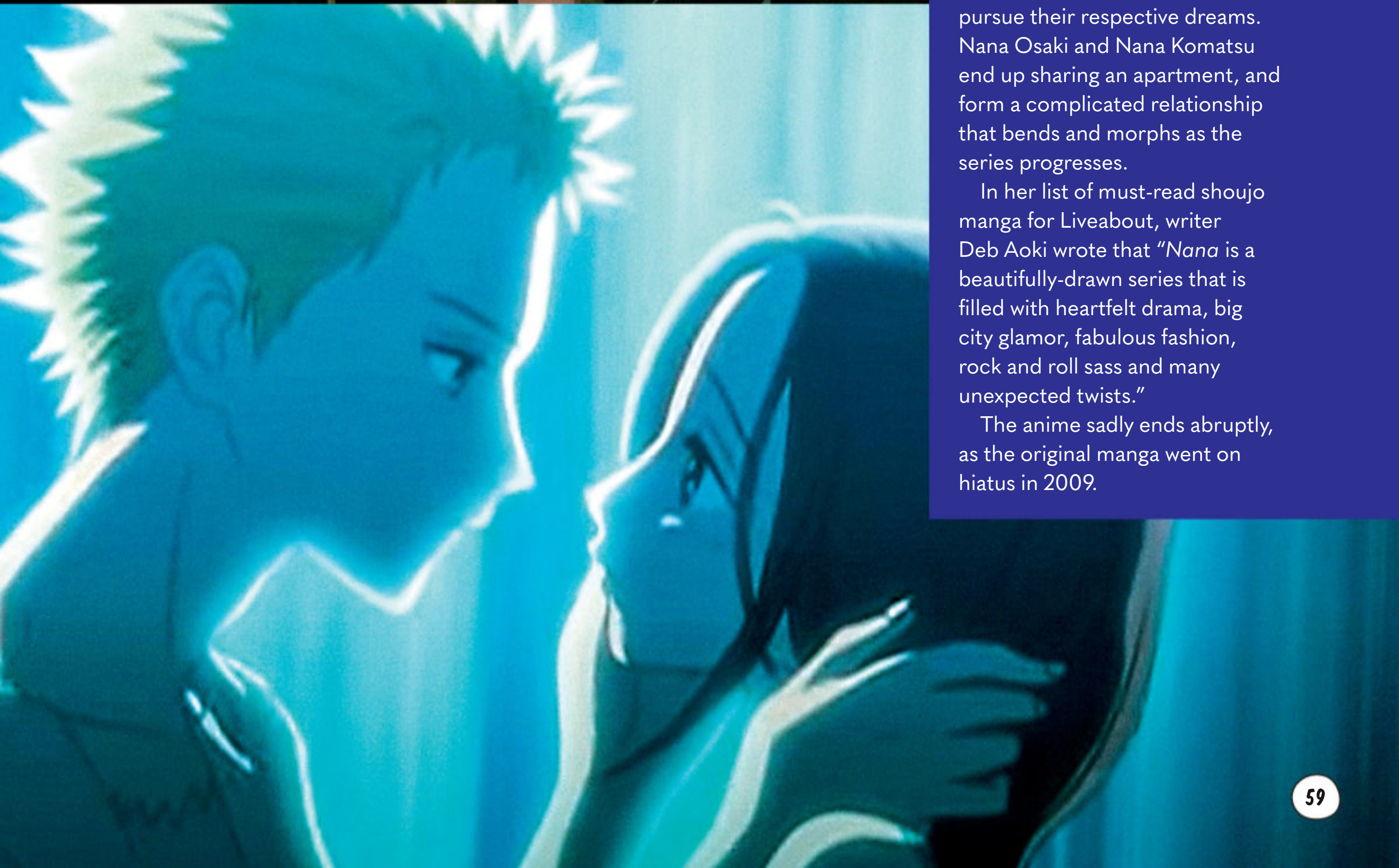
NANA

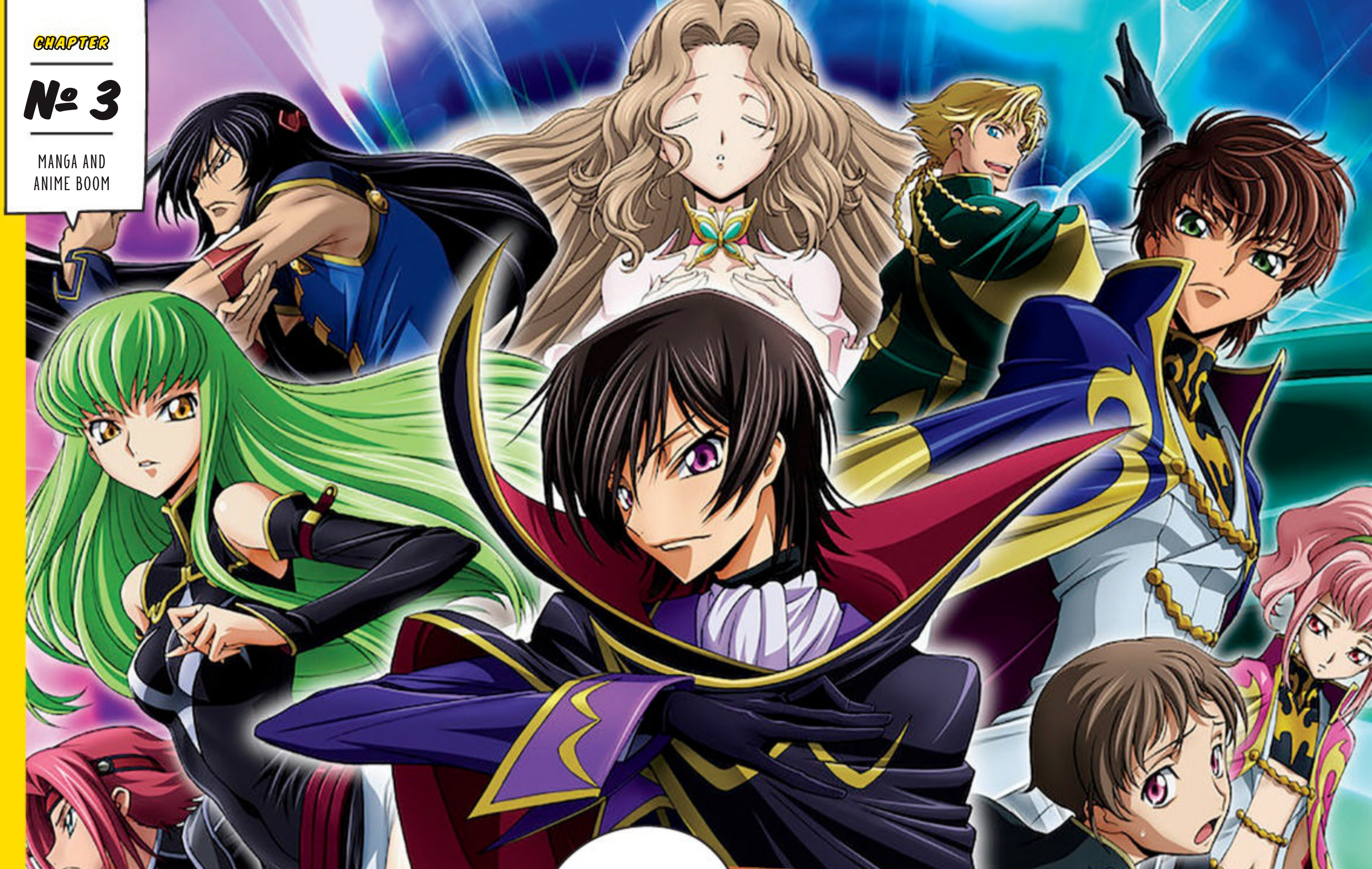
2006-2007

Nana is one of the best josei and shoujo series. It is a heartfelt and realistic coming-of-age story about two women, both named Nana, who move to Tokyo to pursue their respective dreams. Nana Osaki and Nana Komatsu end up sharing an apartment, and form a complicated relationship that bends and morphs as the series progresses.

In her list of must-read shoujo manga for Liveabout, writer Deb Aoki wrote that "*Nana* is a beautifully-drawn series that is filled with heartfelt drama, big city glamor, fabulous fashion, rock and roll sass and many unexpected twists."

The anime sadly ends abruptly, as the original manga went on hiatus in 2009.



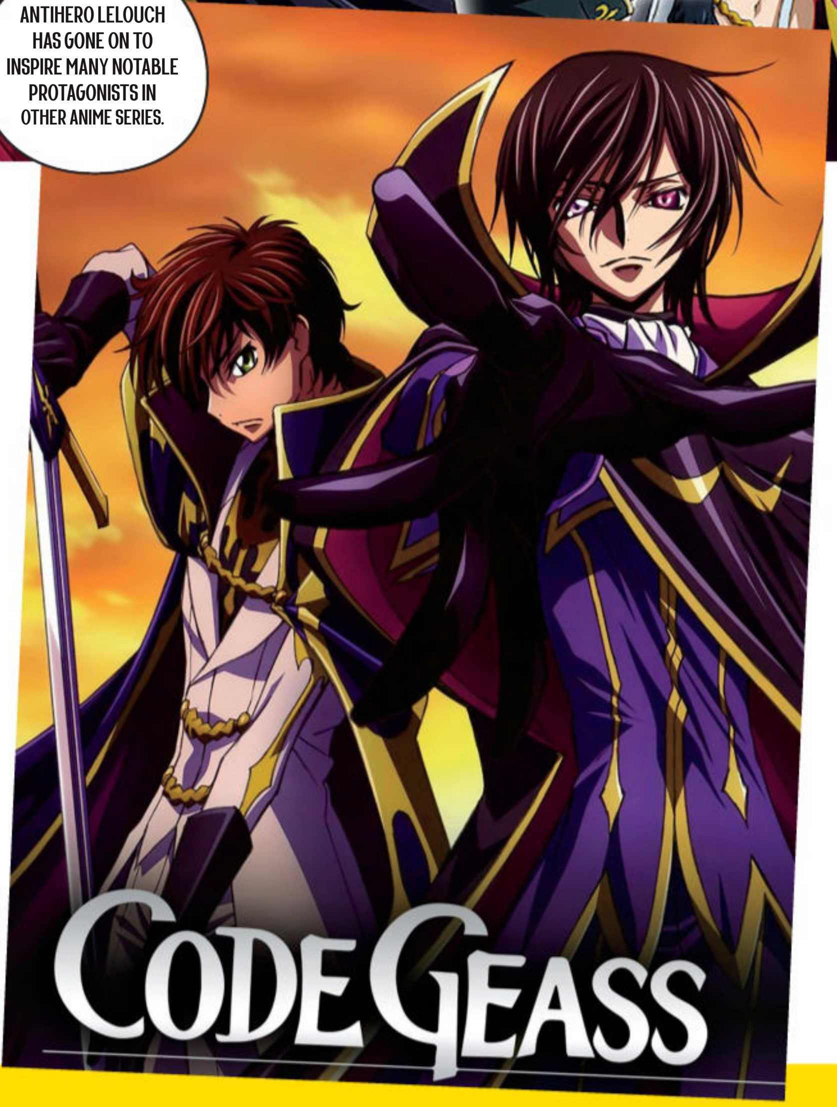


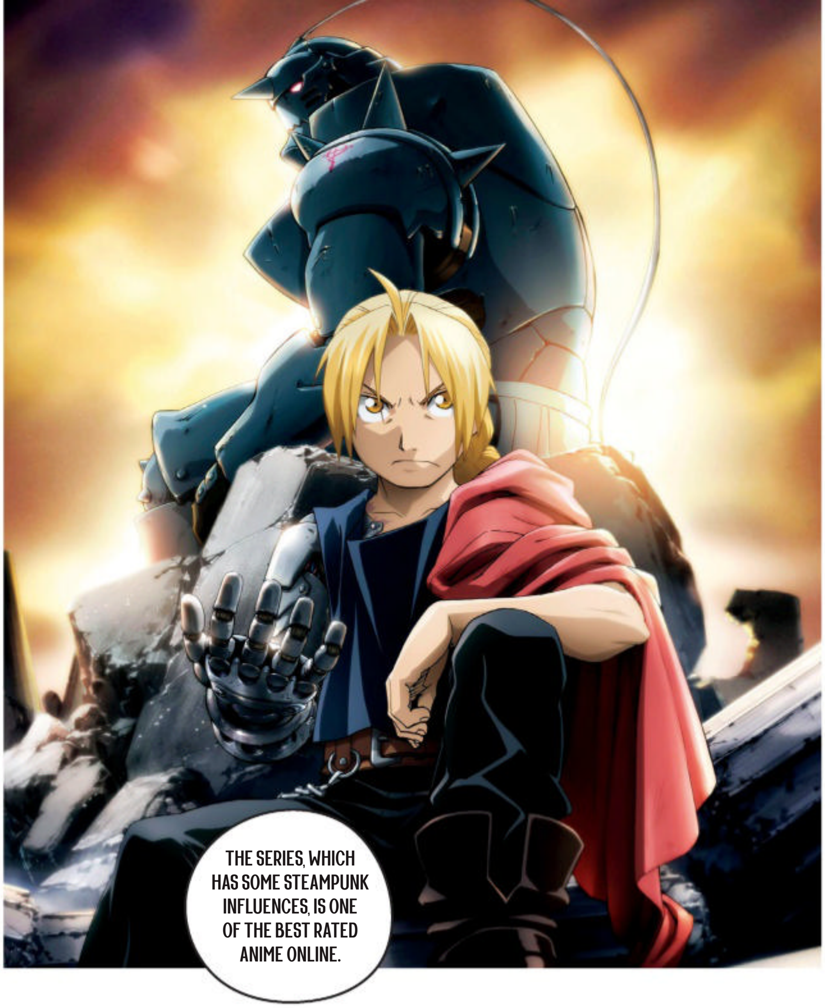
ANTIHERO LELOUCH HAS GONE ON TO INSPIRE MANY NOTABLE PROTAGONISTS IN OTHER ANIME SERIES.

CODE GEASS
2006-2008

Part sci-fi, part teen drama, *Code Geass* is a genre mishmash that has something for everyone. Set in an alternate history, the story follows the young Lelouch Lamperouge, an exiled prince who obtains a mysterious superpower that inspires him to lead a rebellion against the tyrannical Holy Britannian Empire. The dense plot and action is executed masterfully thanks to animation by Sunrise Inc., with character designs by the famous all-female CLAMP manga artist group.

Be warned: *Code Geass* is not a simple "good guys vs. bad guys" story, especially when it comes to protagonist Lelouch. "Lelouch Lamperouge…has the face of a teen heartthrob and the soul of the Count of Monte Cristo, bent on revenge and without any compunctions about what he has to do to achieve it," said D.F. Smith in a review for IGN.





THE SERIES, WHICH HAS SOME STEAMPUNK INFLUENCES, IS ONE OF THE BEST RATED ANIME ONLINE.

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST: BROTHERHOOD 2009-2010

If you're looking for a thoughtful, philosophical shonen series, this one's for you. Conversations around truth, morality and war are commonplace. An epic battle might be followed by hours of intrigue and sleuthing. But at its core, it's a heartfelt story about two brothers trying to heal.

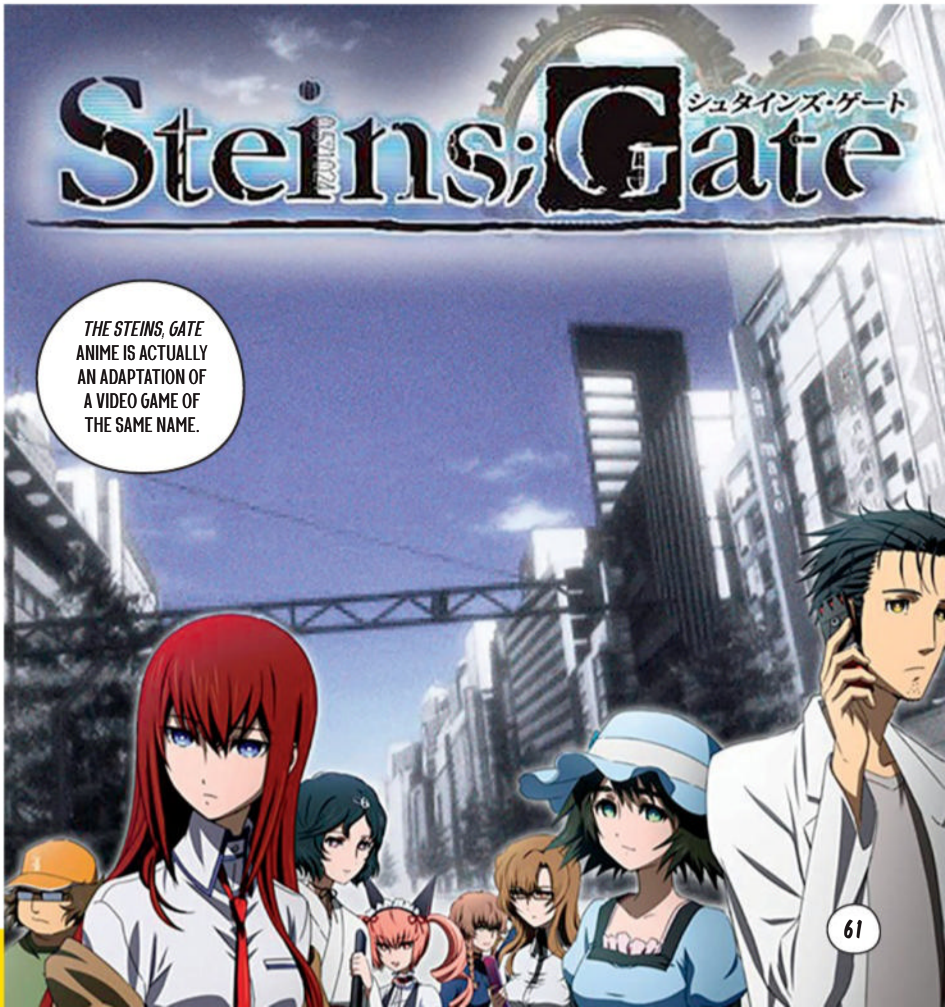
After the passing of their mother, Edward and Alphonse Elric attempt to bring her back to life using alchemy, to disastrous results. They then go on a journey to find the legendary Philosopher's Stone in the hopes of getting back what they've lost. In an interview with Looper, series creator Hiromu Arakawa explained, "I think the story's eventual destination might be an understanding of family, in a larger sense of the world."

STEINS; GATE

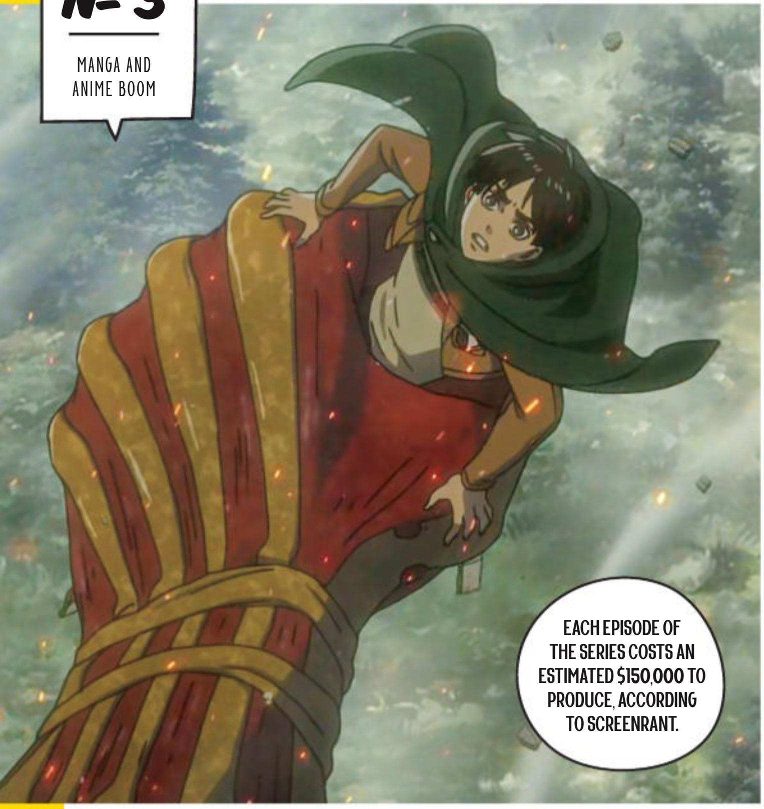
2011

There are very few time-travel series such as *Steins; Gate*. Set in modern-day Tokyo, this sci-fi thriller follows wannabe scientist Rintaro Okabe and his friends as they discover how to send text messages to the past, which drastically changes the present. *Steins; Gate* starts off slow, but by the middle of its 24 episode run, the stakes and intensity are extreme.

While its intricate plotlines surrounding parallel worlds is appealing, *Steins; Gate* truly shines thanks to its strength as an interpersonal character drama. "Time travel may be its sci-fi hook, but really, it's about a group of flawed yet ultimately likeable people and how they're affected by their decisions," wrote Ryan Lambie in his review for Den of Geek.



THE STEINS; GATE ANIME IS ACTUALLY AN ADAPTATION OF A VIDEO GAME OF THE SAME NAME.

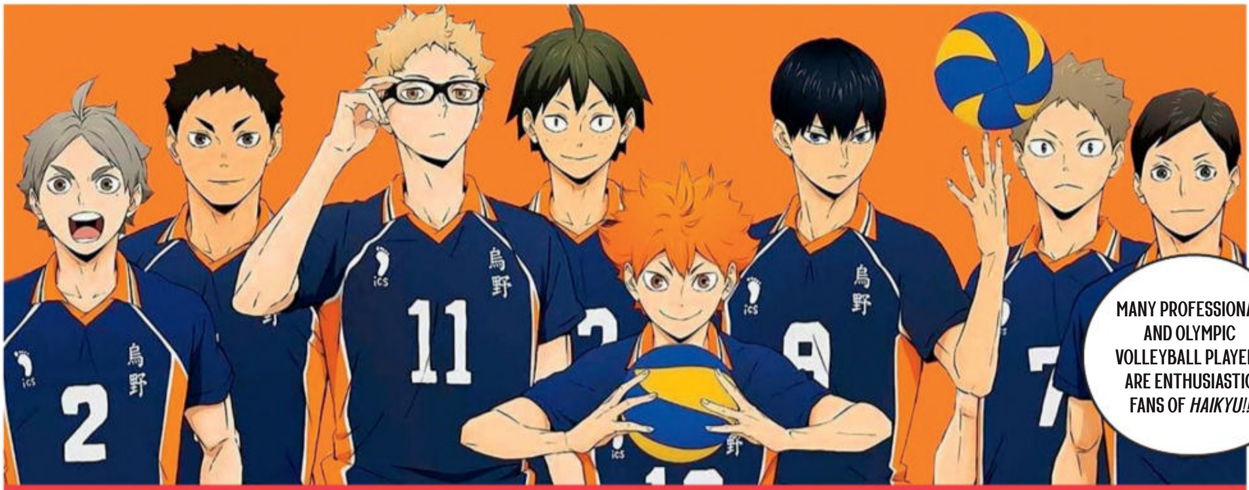


EACH EPISODE OF THE SERIES COSTS AN ESTIMATED $150,000 TO PRODUCE, ACCORDING TO SCREENRANT.

ATTACK ON TITAN 2013-present

It's hard to find anyone who hasn't heard of *Attack on Titan*. According to February 2021 metrics gathered by Parrot Analytics, *Attack on Titan* wasn't just Netflix's most-watched show—it had nearly 60 times the demand of any other series on the platform. Looking at the show itself, it's easy to see the appeal. In a fantasy historical past, all of humanity lives inside a walled city, protected from massive, man-eating humanoid creatures called Titans. One day, our protagonists find themselves near the wall when the unthinkable happens: The wall breaks.

Bloody action, gorgeous animation and a bombastic soundtrack are central to *Attack on Titan*'s allure. But it's also known for its big twists. "Perhaps one of the best aspects of *Attack on Titan* has been its 'surprises,'" wrote Evan Valentine in a review for Comic Book, "the ways it was able to throw in shocking story beats."

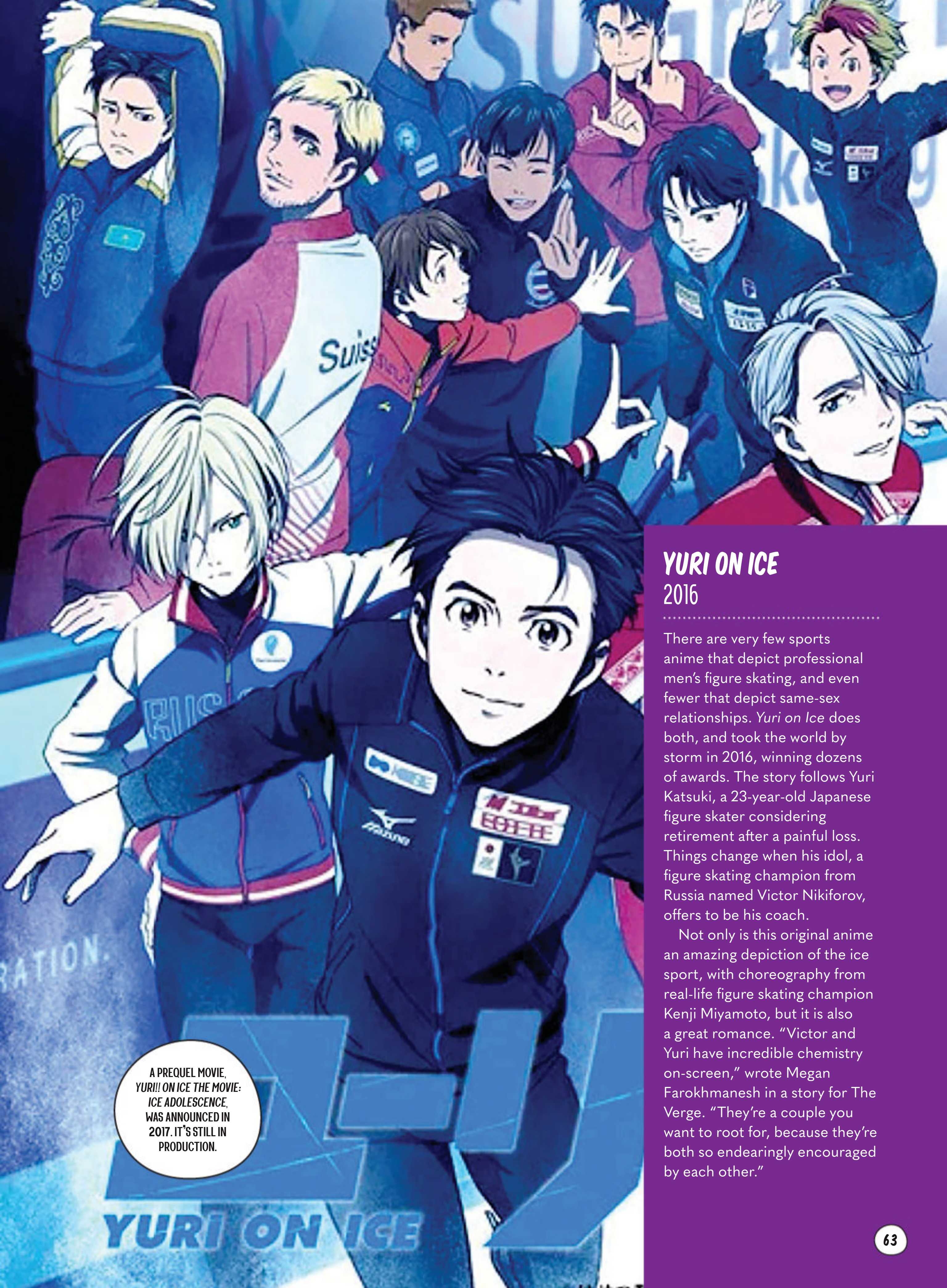


MANY PROFESSIONAL AND OLYMPIC VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS ARE ENTHUSIASTIC FANS OF *HAIKYU!!*

HAIKYU!! 2014-present

Haikyu!! is one of the best sports anime airing. Like many great stories about athletics, it starts with a rivalry, this one between the passionate but inexperienced Shoyo Hinata and the arrogant prodigy Tobio Kageyama. But once the two volleyball players enter high school, they end up on the same team, and start a partnership that has the potential to take their team to the top.

When the manga and anime became popular in 2015, real-life high-school volleyball in Japan experienced a surge of growth. Series creator Haruichi Furudate was himself a high-school volleyball athlete, and depicts the sport with passion, authenticity and heart. "*Haikyu!!* is entertaining and engaging…but it's also inspiring," said Geoff Thew on his wildly popular YouTube channel Mother's Basement. "Motivating, in that very specific way that makes you want to get up off the couch and go for a run as soon as you're done watching."



A PREQUEL MOVIE, *YURI!! ON ICE THE MOVIE: ICE ADOLESCENCE*, WAS ANNOUNCED IN 2017. IT'S STILL IN PRODUCTION.

YURI ON ICE

2016

There are very few sports anime that depict professional men's figure skating, and even fewer that depict same-sex relationships. *Yuri on Ice* does both, and took the world by storm in 2016, winning dozens of awards. The story follows Yuri Katsuki, a 23-year-old Japanese figure skater considering retirement after a painful loss. Things change when his idol, a figure skating champion from Russia named Victor Nikiforov, offers to be his coach.

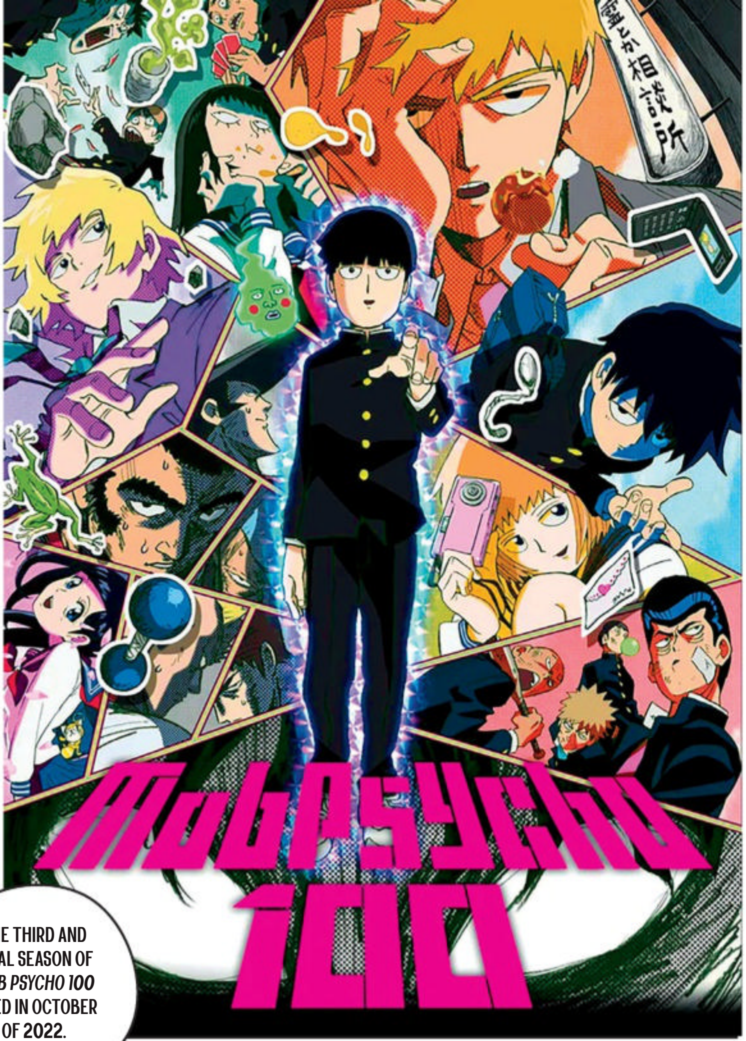
Not only is this original anime an amazing depiction of the ice sport, with choreography from real-life figure skating champion Kenji Miyamoto, but it is also a great romance. "Victor and Yuri have incredible chemistry on-screen," wrote Megan Farokhmanesh in a story for The Verge. "They're a couple you want to root for, because they're both so endearingly encouraged by each other."

MOB PSYCHO 100

2016-2022

The second series by reclusive mangaka artist One, *Mob Psycho 100* is an irresistible anime with heartfelt characters and consistently amazing animation from Bones Inc. "This show, about a fake psychic con man and his real psychic assistant, is one of the funniest anime ever," wrote Austen Goslin for Polygon's Best Anime of the Decade list.

Mob Psycho 100 differentiates itself from other shonen with its empathy. "The show's first season...[ended] with the characters deciding that kindness and empathy were more important traits in a person than strength or special powers," noted Goslin. That focus on kindness and everyone being equally important is what makes *Mob Psycho 100* truly unique.



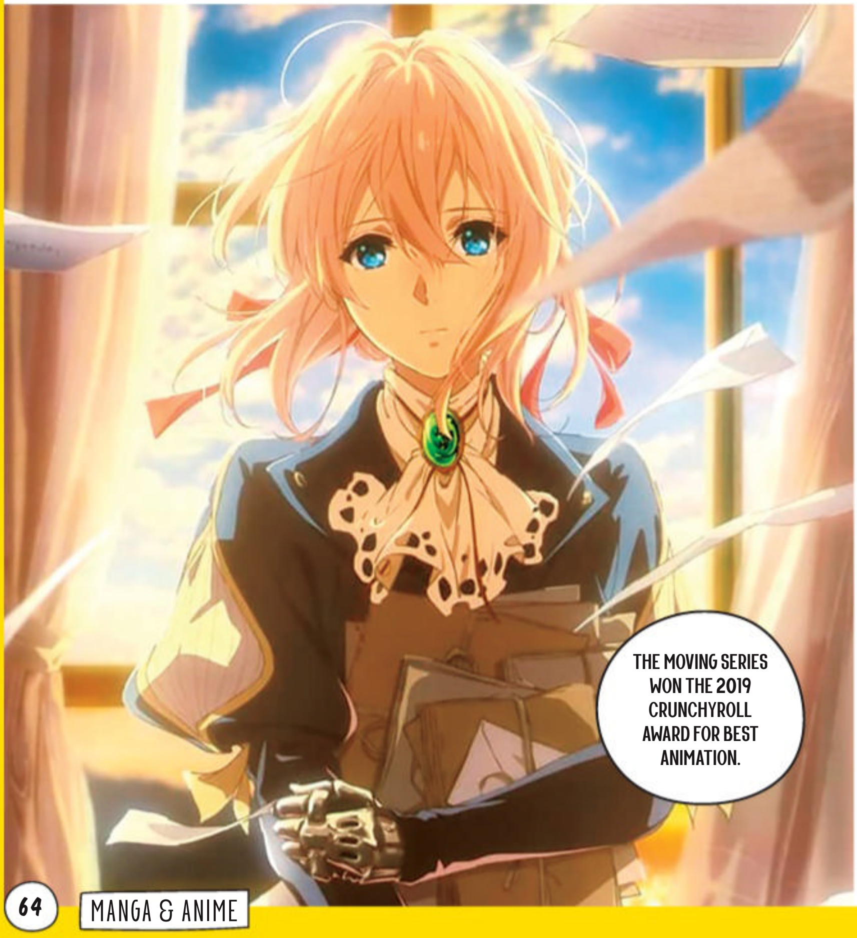
THE THIRD AND FINAL SEASON OF *MOB PSYCHO 100* AIRED IN OCTOBER OF 2022.

VIOLET EVERGARDEN

2018

As gorgeous as it is heavy and heartbreaking, this series is a story about a child soldier returning to society after a war's end. That soldier, the emotionally stifled Violet Evergarden, has only ever known battle. But now, she wants to understand the final words of her commanding officer: "I love you."

It's a weighty start to an emotional story. But at its core, *Violet Evergarden* is about how love can heal trauma. The beautifully animated drama is approachable at only 13 episodes long. When asked about his focus with the show, the series director Taichi Ishidate said in the *Violet Evergarden* official fan book, "If we were able to depict emotions and a sense of earnestness that are universally felt, then perhaps *Violet Evergarden* could become a much beloved work."



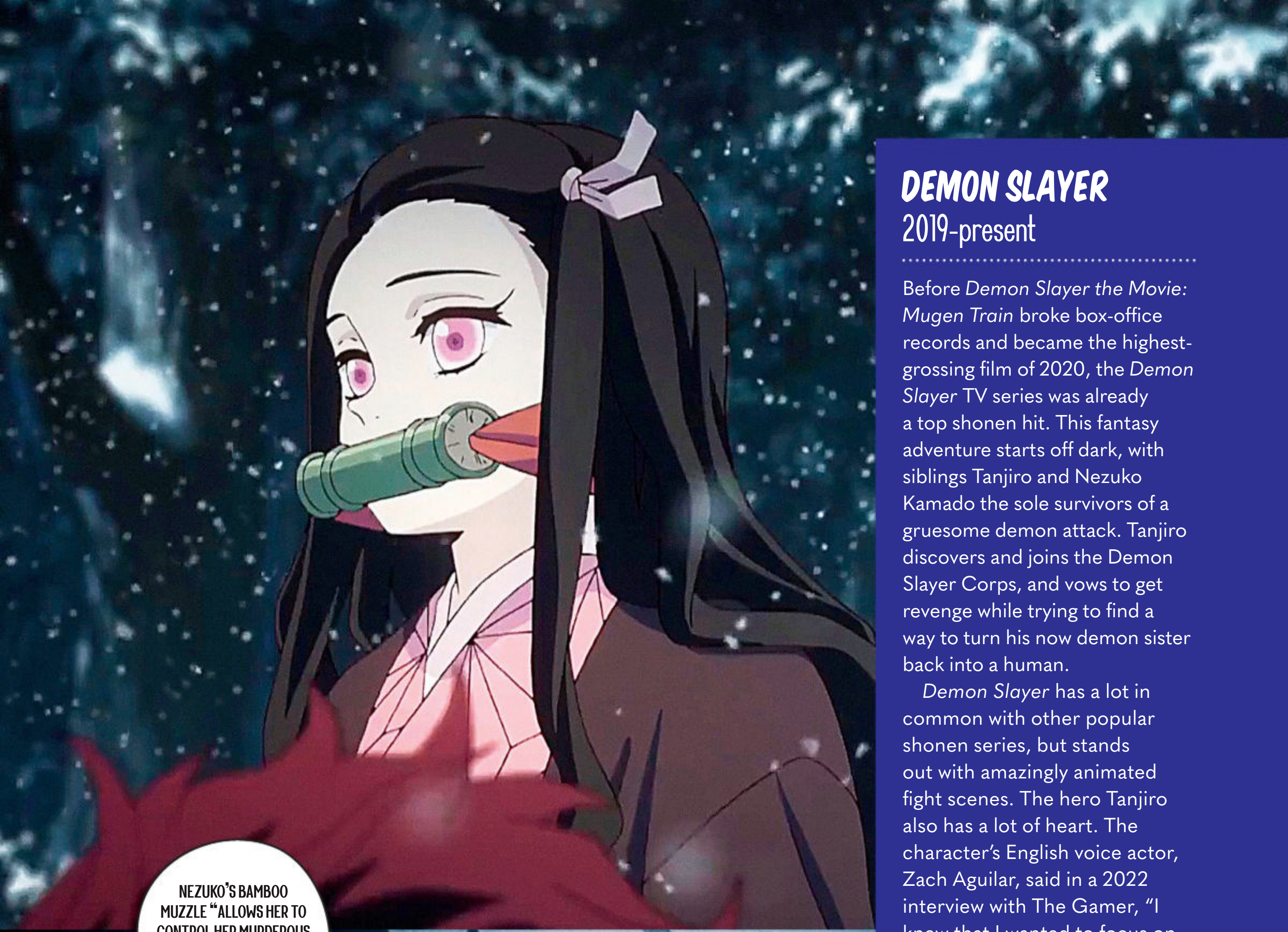
THE MOVING SERIES WON THE 2019 CRUNCHYROLL AWARD FOR BEST ANIMATION.

DEMON SLAYER

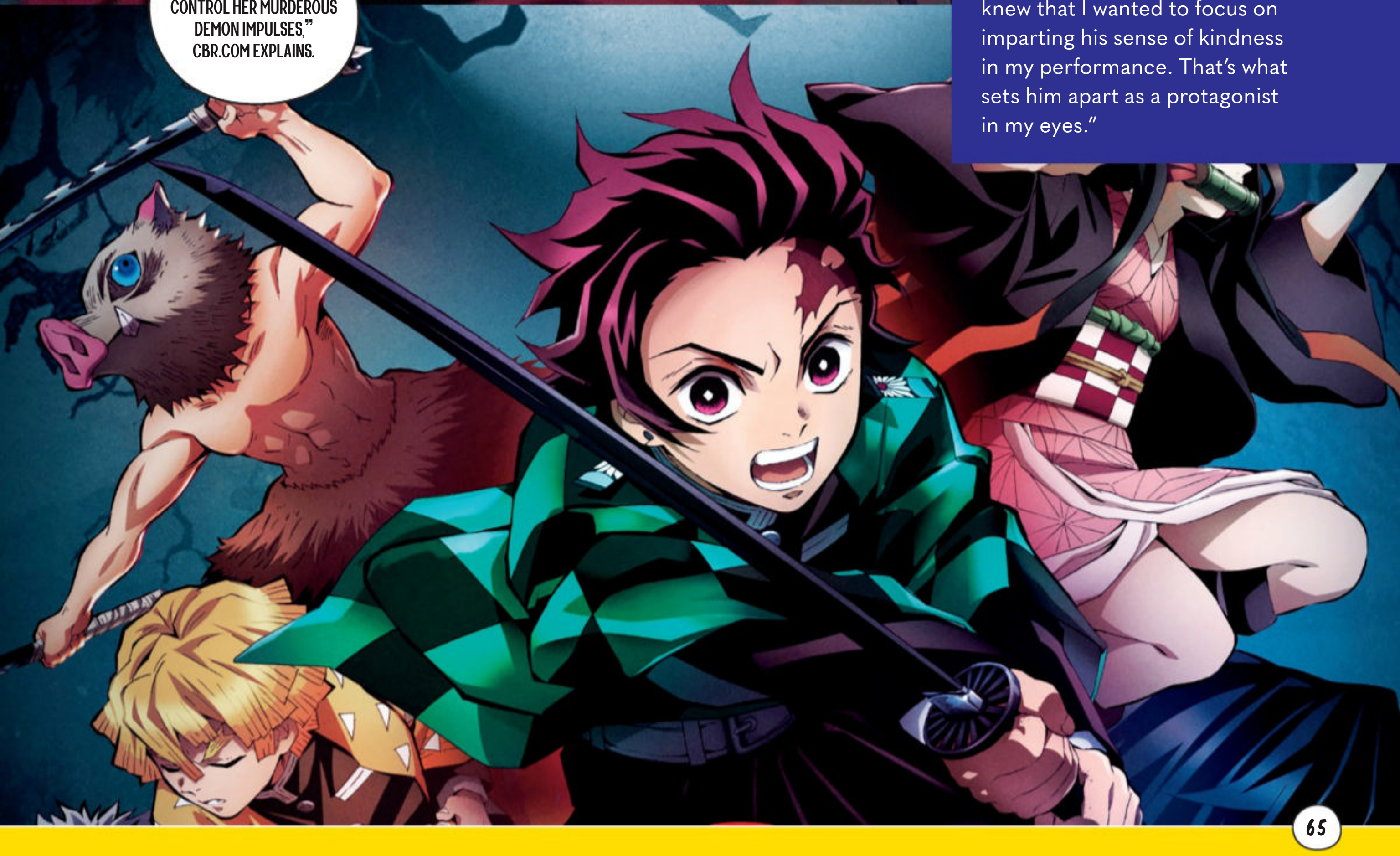
2019-present

Before *Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train* broke box-office records and became the highest-grossing film of 2020, the *Demon Slayer* TV series was already a top shonen hit. This fantasy adventure starts off dark, with siblings Tanjiro and Nezuko Kamado the sole survivors of a gruesome demon attack. Tanjiro discovers and joins the Demon Slayer Corps, and vows to get revenge while trying to find a way to turn his now demon sister back into a human.

Demon Slayer has a lot in common with other popular shonen series, but stands out with amazingly animated fight scenes. The hero Tanjiro also has a lot of heart. The character's English voice actor, Zach Aguilar, said in a 2022 interview with The Gamer, "I knew that I wanted to focus on imparting his sense of kindness in my performance. That's what sets him apart as a protagonist in my eyes."



NEZUKO'S BAMBOO MUZZLE "ALLOWS HER TO CONTROL HER MURDEROUS DEMON IMPULSES," CBR.COM EXPLAINS.



NAUSICAÄ
Of The Valley Of The Wind
Picture Book

> “I DARE SAY THE MANGA IS HAYAO MIYAZAKI’S FINEST WORK EVER,” WROTE ANIME NEWS NETWORK’S MIKE CRANDOL.

15 CAN’T-MISS MANGA TITLES

These original series are still captivating die-hards and new fans alike.

MANY OF THE BEST ANIME ARE BASED on incredible manga. While some anime surpass their source material in terms of quality, a lot of them don’t, meaning the manga is the best way to enjoy the story. Here is a list of 15 stellar series that are best enjoyed on the page, not the screen.

NAUSICAÄ OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND

1982-1994

The only major illustrated work by animation legend Hayao Miyazaki, *Nausicaä* is a layered vision of an apocalyptic world devastated by climate change and human arrogance. It follows the princess Nausicaä as she leads and defends her small kingdom in a world devastated by a cataclysmic global war. Despite the decaying state of the world, some still vie for power, while Nausicaä strives for peace.

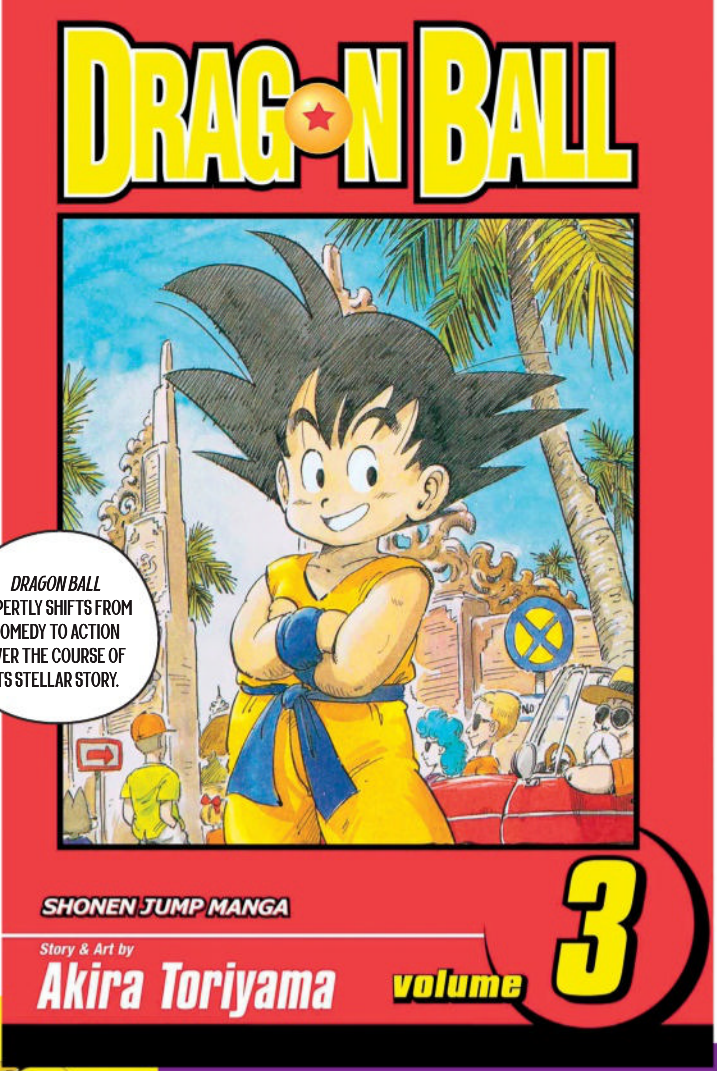
“*Nausicaä* is the story of an empowered woman struggling to make her vision of peace real in a world of poison men,” said Arpad Okay in a review for Comics Beat.

DRAGON BALL

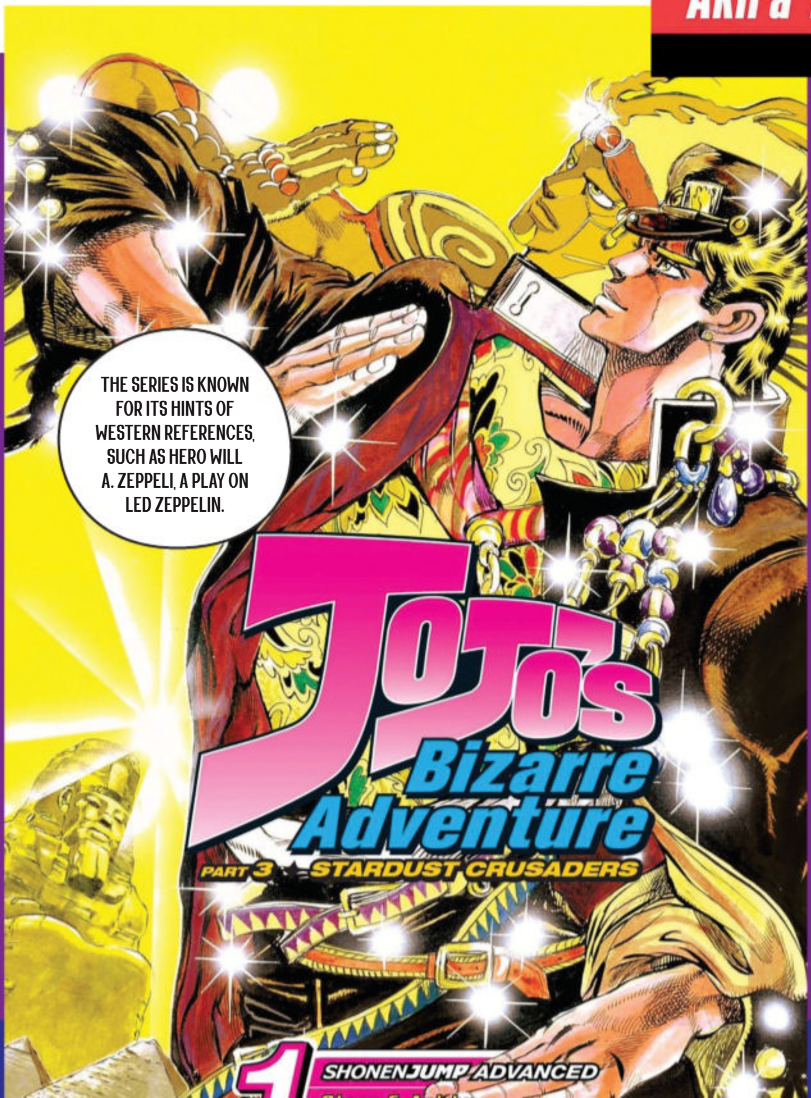
1984-1995

Of all the shonen series that exist (and it's a crowded genre), *Dragon Ball* is by far the most seminal. Tropes common to the genre, such as long-term villains, transformational powers and superpowered martial arts combat were all popularized by *Dragon Ball* (specifically *Dragon Ball Z*). This towering series stars Son Goku, a martial arts master, and follows his youth and adulthood protecting the world from evil and seeking ever-stronger foes to prove himself against.

While the beginnings of the series are more adventure focused, complex battles became the manga's hallmark. "I just figured it'd be fun to have…the setting always changing, all sorts of different enemies popping up, different locations, etc.," said creator Akira Toriyama in an interview in the *Dragon Ball 30th Anniversary Super History Book*.



DRAGON BALL EXPERTLY SHIFTS FROM COMEDY TO ACTION OVER THE COURSE OF ITS STELLAR STORY.



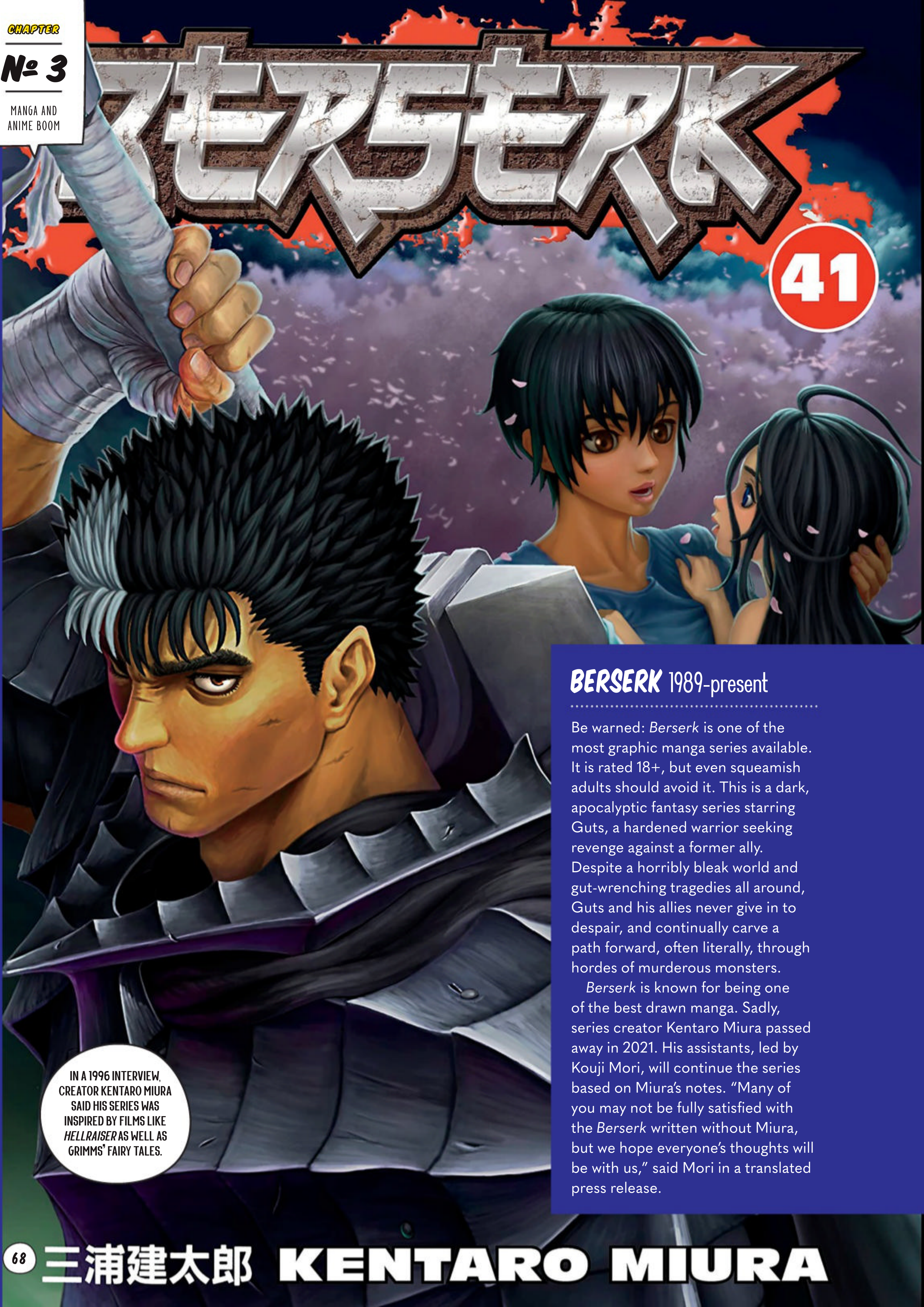
THE SERIES IS KNOWN FOR ITS HINTS OF WESTERN REFERENCES, SUCH AS HERO WILL A. ZEPPELI, A PLAY ON LED ZEPPELIN.

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

1987-present

Even if you haven't read *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*, you've surely seen its influence. Absurd outfits, exaggerated character poses, powerful spiritual guardians and vile villains are all hallmarks of the series. The story chronicles the Joestar family bloodline, with distinct, individual arcs following a different Joestar in a different time period. While there are some other elements, this is a shonen manga focused on battles, villains and fight scenes.

Having a rotating cast of protagonists was a bold move in the 1980s, and is still unusual today. "The editors at the time weren't keen on the idea of switching protagonists, especially for a popular series," said creator Hirohiko Araki in an interview for *Kappa Magazine*. "Fortunately, I was right, and *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* has been continuing its success since 1987."



BERSERK 1989-present

Be warned: *Berserk* is one of the most graphic manga series available. It is rated 18+, but even squeamish adults should avoid it. This is a dark, apocalyptic fantasy series starring Guts, a hardened warrior seeking revenge against a former ally. Despite a horribly bleak world and gut-wrenching tragedies all around, Guts and his allies never give in to despair, and continually carve a path forward, often literally, through hordes of murderous monsters.

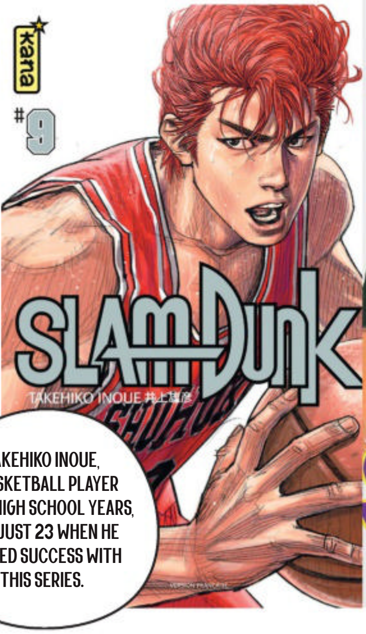
Berserk is known for being one of the best drawn manga. Sadly, series creator Kentaro Miura passed away in 2021. His assistants, led by Kouji Mori, will continue the series based on Miura's notes. "Many of you may not be fully satisfied with the *Berserk* written without Miura, but we hope everyone's thoughts will be with us," said Mori in a translated press release.

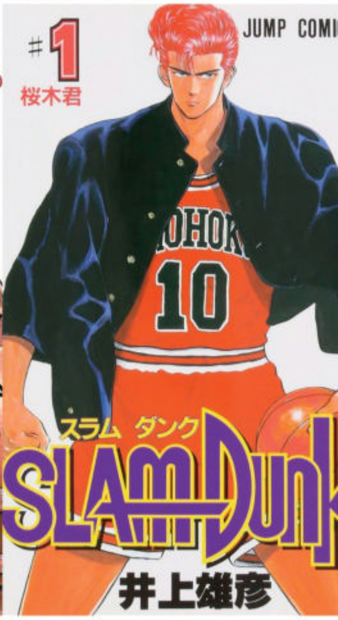
IN A 1996 INTERVIEW, CREATOR KENTARO MIURA SAID HIS SERIES WAS INSPIRED BY FILMS LIKE *HELLRAISER* AS WELL AS GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES.

SLAM DUNK 1990-1996

Another series known for incredibly detailed art, *Slam Dunk* is the bestselling sports manga of all time. The story follows high school delinquent Hanamichi Sakuragi, who joins the school basketball team to get closer to a girl he has a crush on. Over time, he discovers his love and talent for the sport.

The star of the show is really its creator, Takehiko Inoue, who is well-known for a realistic, hyperdetailed art style. In a 2012 interview with CNN, Inoue explained his process: "I try to express what kind of feelings the characters are having, and how strong those feelings are, as if they are actually coming out of my body."





TAKEHIKO INOUE, A BASKETBALL PLAYER IN HIS HIGH SCHOOL YEARS, WAS JUST 23 WHEN HE SCORED SUCCESS WITH THIS SERIES.

NAOKI URASAWA
Volume 1
MONSTER

MONSTER WAS INSPIRED BY THE 1963-1967 AMERICAN CRIME DRAMA *THE FUGITIVE*.

MONSTER 1994-2001

The most popular series by veteran manga artist Naoki Urasawa, *Monster* is a tense crime thriller akin to the best murder mysteries. A brilliant surgeon named Kenzō Tenma abandons everything to pursue a man he saved in the operating room, a man who turned into a prolific serial killer.

Urasawa is best known for writing mystery story lines and drawing very expressive, realistic characters. "There are no identical faces in different situations," said Urasawa in a 2019 interview with J-Generation. "Instead there are subtle changes that occur in a person's facial expression from moment to moment, and that's what I try to capture."

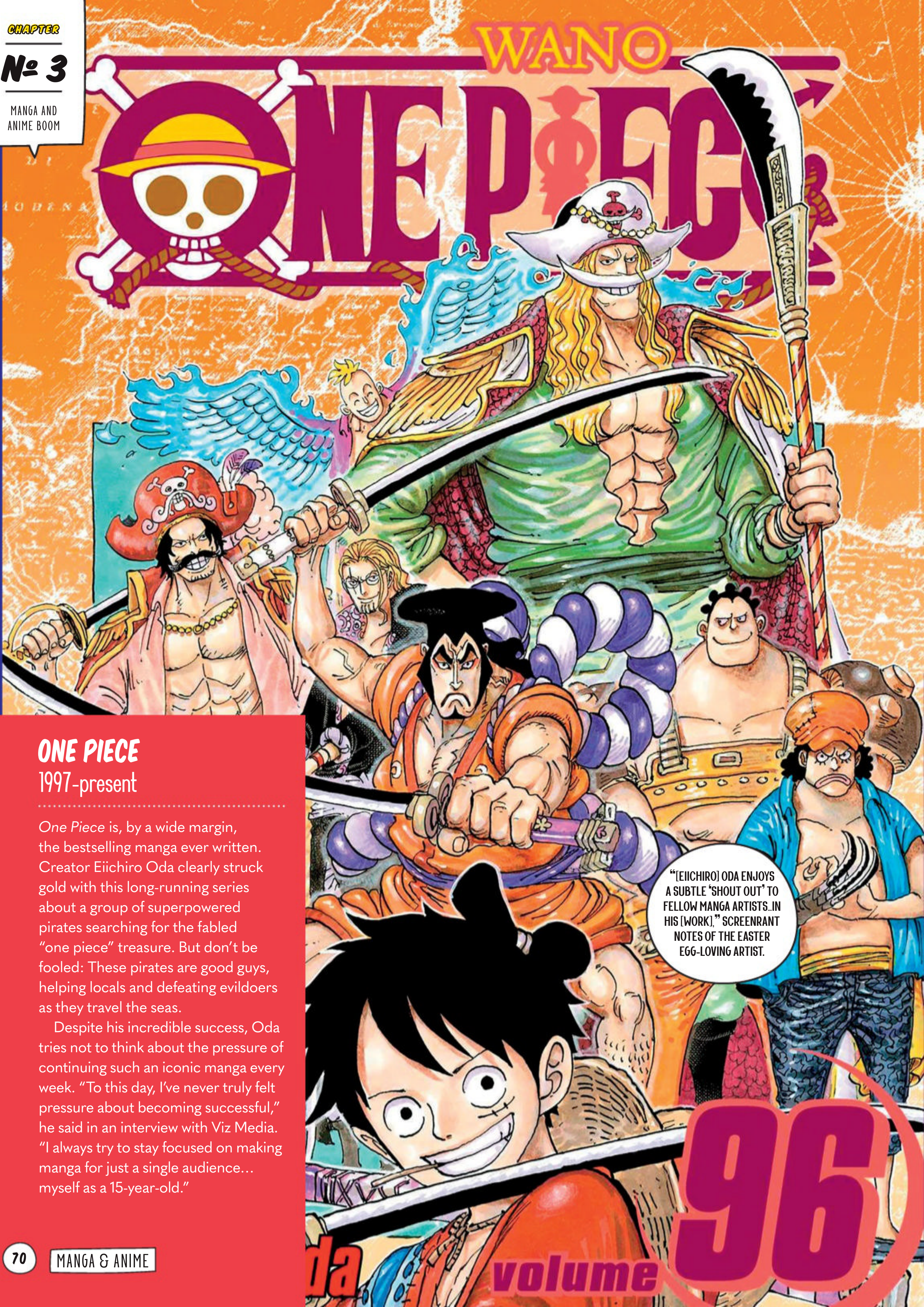
CASE CLOSED 1994-present

Known as *Detective Conan* in Japan, *Case Closed* is one of the longest-running detective manga series. High school detective Jimmy Kudo (Shinichi Kudo in Japan) is the smartest around, but is magically transformed into a child while investigating a shady organization. The series follows Kudo as he attempts to solve mysteries despite his now childlike appearance.

Much of the complications and comedy come from Kudo being a brilliant detective stuck in a child's body. In a translated interview with This Mystery Is Excellent!, creator Gosho Aoyama revealed that, despite *Case Closed* being a long-running mystery series, he does not plan out very much beforehand. "I don't write plots. I don't even take notes when I have discussions with my editors about twists. I just start to write it, and, if I think that there's something wrong, I return to the beginning."

SHONEN SUNDAY
CASE CLOSED
名探偵コナン
Story and art by
Gosho Aoyama
Vol. 1

THE *CASE CLOSED* SERIES HAS MORE THAN 102 VOLUMES AND 1,000-PLUS ANIME EPISODES.



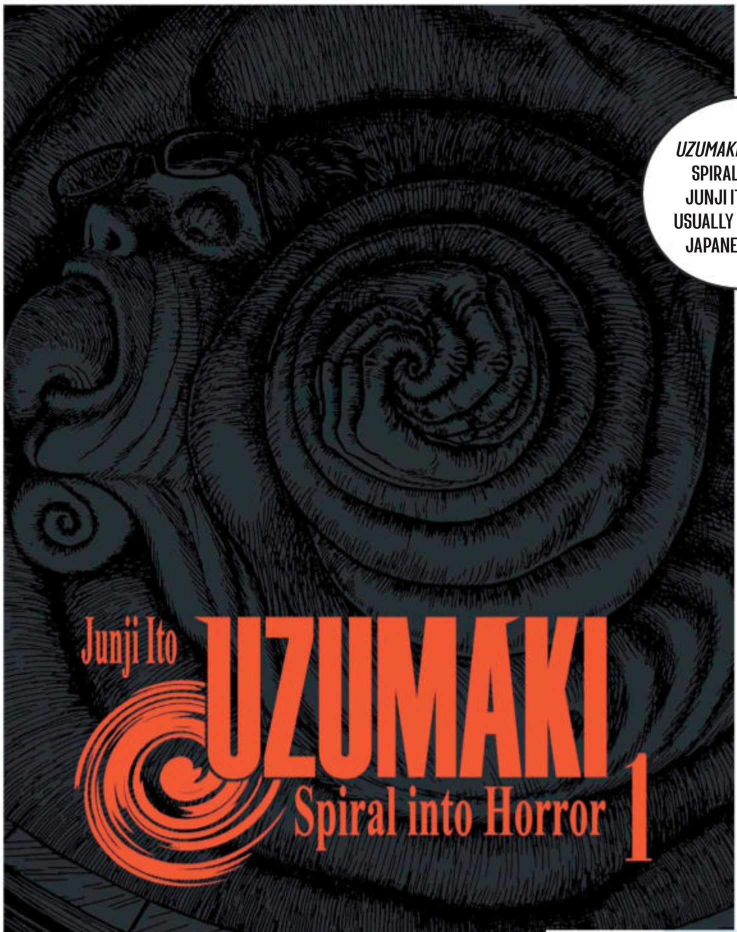
ONE PIECE

1997-present

One Piece is, by a wide margin, the bestselling manga ever written. Creator Eiichiro Oda clearly struck gold with this long-running series about a group of superpowered pirates searching for the fabled "one piece" treasure. But don't be fooled: These pirates are good guys, helping locals and defeating evildoers as they travel the seas.

Despite his incredible success, Oda tries not to think about the pressure of continuing such an iconic manga every week. "To this day, I've never truly felt pressure about becoming successful," he said in an interview with Viz Media. "I always try to stay focused on making manga for just a single audience… myself as a 15-year-old."

"[EIICHIRO] ODA ENJOYS A SUBTLE 'SHOUT OUT' TO FELLOW MANGA ARTISTS…IN HIS [WORK]," SCREENRANT NOTES OF THE EASTER EGG-LOVING ARTIST.



UZUMAKI SUBVERTS SPIRALS, WHICH JUNJI ITO SAW AS USUALLY POSITIVE IN JAPANESE MEDIA.

UZUMAKI 1998-1999

The only horror story on the list, *Uzumaki* is a three-part series created by Junji Ito. Ito is manga's most famous horror creator, with a storied career that dates back to the 1980s. *Uzumaki* centers on the fictional city of Kurouzu-cho and its citizens, who are haunted by a supernatural curse that's centered on spirals.

"Horror tends to stimulate an interest in the extremes of existence, like curiosity, fear and the grotesque," said Ito in an interview with Gizmodo. "When [horror] incorporates something fantastical like supernatural phenomena, it allows for the expression of really unique ideas."

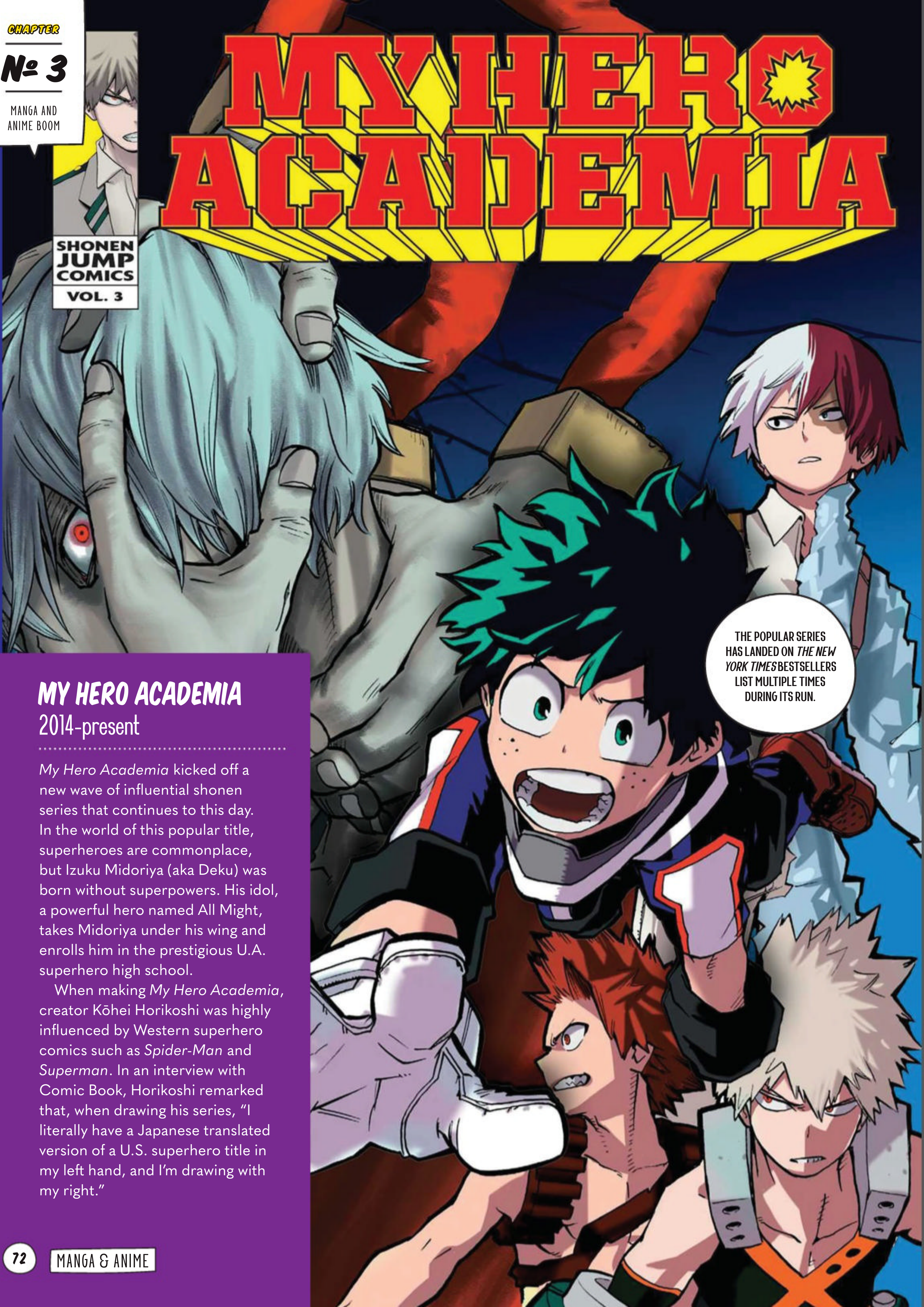
FRUITS BASKET
1998-2006

This is one of the bestselling shoujo manga, and for good reason. *Fruits Basket* balances heavy subject matters such as family abuse and depression with positive messages of empathy, hope and humor. The series centers on protagonist Tohru Honda, who after becoming an orphan, moves in with the mysterious, shape-changing Sohma family.

Part of *Fruits Basket*'s enduring appeal is its complex cast of characters. In an interview with Funimation, creator Natsuki Takaya detailed her philosophy on building characters. "When I create a character, I focus a lot on what they care about, and what convictions they have," she said. "I also focus on what kind of environment the character was born and raised in."

Fruits Basket™
TOKYOPOP
The #1 selling shojo manga in America!
22
Natsuki Takaya

THE CHINESE ZODIAC PLAYS HEAVILY INTO BOTH THE PLOT AND THE CHARACTERS OF *FRUITS BASKET*.



THE POPULAR SERIES HAS LANDED ON *THE NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLERS LIST MULTIPLE TIMES DURING ITS RUN.

MY HERO ACADEMIA

2014-present

My Hero Academia kicked off a new wave of influential shonen series that continues to this day. In the world of this popular title, superheroes are commonplace, but Izuku Midoriya (aka Deku) was born without superpowers. His idol, a powerful hero named All Might, takes Midoriya under his wing and enrolls him in the prestigious U.A. superhero high school.

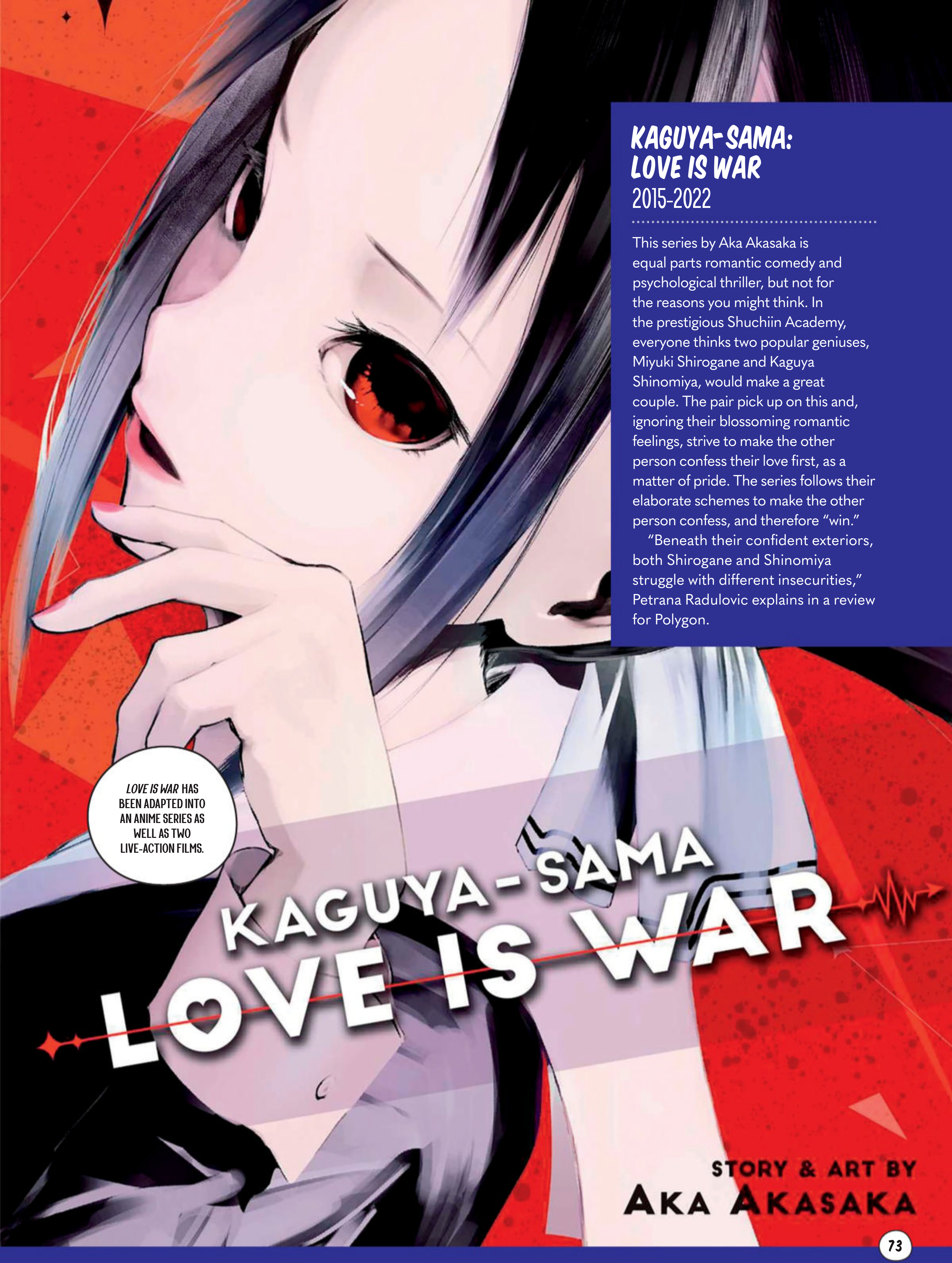
When making *My Hero Academia*, creator Kōhei Horikoshi was highly influenced by Western superhero comics such as *Spider-Man* and *Superman*. In an interview with Comic Book, Horikoshi remarked that, when drawing his series, "I literally have a Japanese translated version of a U.S. superhero title in my left hand, and I'm drawing with my right."

KAGUYA-SAMA: LOVE IS WAR

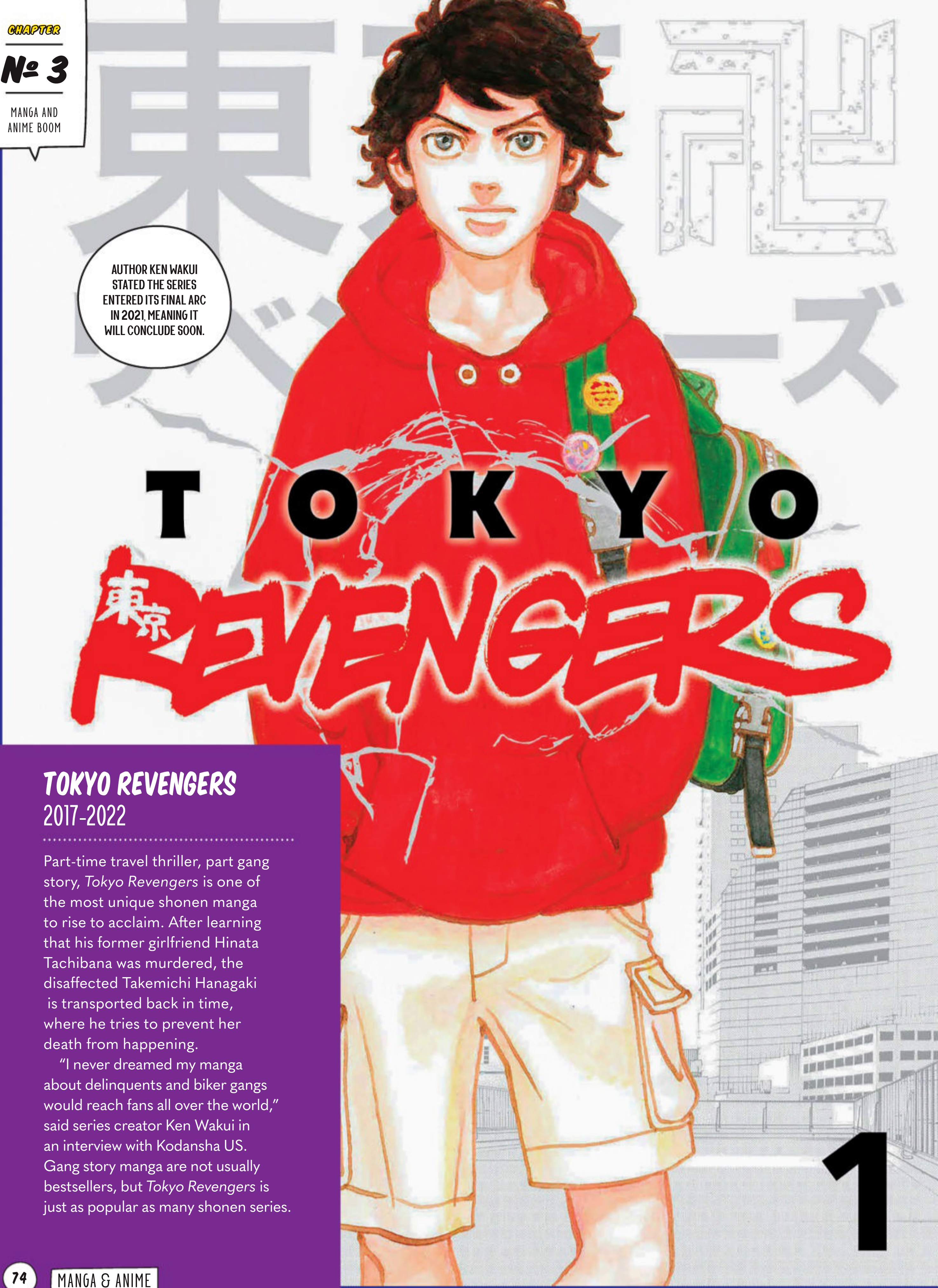
2015-2022

This series by Aka Akasaka is equal parts romantic comedy and psychological thriller, but not for the reasons you might think. In the prestigious Shuchiin Academy, everyone thinks two popular geniuses, Miyuki Shirogane and Kaguya Shinomiya, would make a great couple. The pair pick up on this and, ignoring their blossoming romantic feelings, strive to make the other person confess their love first, as a matter of pride. The series follows their elaborate schemes to make the other person confess, and therefore "win."

"Beneath their confident exteriors, both Shirogane and Shinomiya struggle with different insecurities," Petrana Radulovic explains in a review for Polygon.



LOVE IS WAR HAS BEEN ADAPTED INTO AN ANIME SERIES AS WELL AS TWO LIVE-ACTION FILMS.



AUTHOR KEN WAKUI STATED THE SERIES ENTERED ITS FINAL ARC IN 2021, MEANING IT WILL CONCLUDE SOON.

TOKYO REVENGERS

2017-2022

Part-time travel thriller, part gang story, *Tokyo Revengers* is one of the most unique shonen manga to rise to acclaim. After learning that his former girlfriend Hinata Tachibana was murdered, the disaffected Takemichi Hanagaki is transported back in time, where he tries to prevent her death from happening.

"I never dreamed my manga about delinquents and biker gangs would reach fans all over the world," said series creator Ken Wakui in an interview with Kodansha US. Gang story manga are not usually bestsellers, but *Tokyo Revengers* is just as popular as many shonen series.

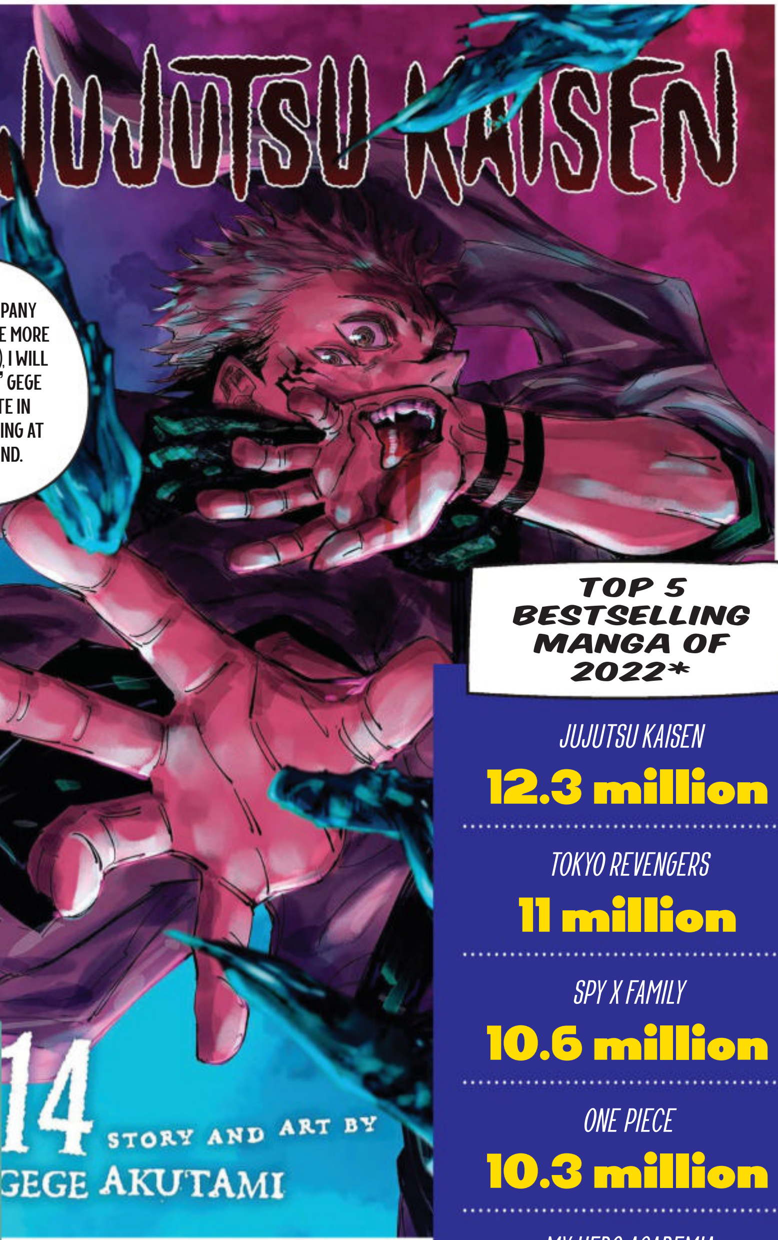
JUJUTSU KAISEN

2018-present

One of the latest shonen series to explode into massive popularity, Gege Akutami's *Jujutsu Kaisen* feels both familiar and wildly different to its predecessors. The setup—a kindhearted high schooler enters into a secret world of superpowered heroes and villains—is nearly identical to hit series such as *Bleach* and *YuYu Hakusho*. But where *Jujutsu Kaisen* differs is in its dark realism: The heroes don't always win, the villains are truly vile and protagonist Yuji Itadori seems destined to die.

"*Jujutsu Kaisen* feels like the first shonen about modern humanity, using a mix of horror and palpable emotion to examine the weight of 21st century life," wrote Chingy Nea in a review for Polygon.

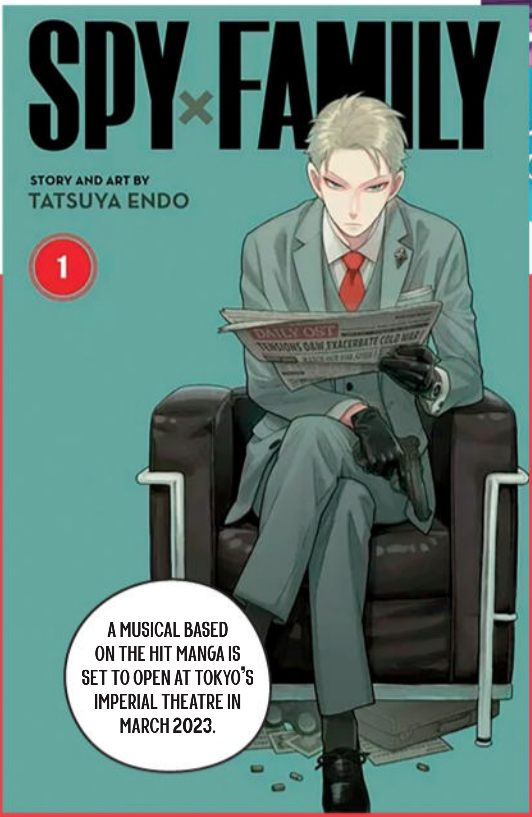
"IF YOU ACCOMPANY ME FOR UP TO ONE MORE YEAR (PROBABLY), I WILL BE VERY HAPPY," GEGE AKUTAMI WROTE IN DECEMBER, HINTING AT THE SERIES' END.



*TOP 5 BESTSELLING MANGA OF 2022**

JUJUTSU KAISEN	**12.3 million**
TOKYO REVENGERS	**11 million**
SPY X FAMILY	**10.6 million**
ONE PIECE	**10.3 million**
MY HERO ACADEMIA	**5.3 million**

SOURCES: ORICON VIA ANIMENEWSNETWORK
*REFLECTS SALES THROUGH NOV. 20, 2022



A MUSICAL BASED ON THE HIT MANGA IS SET TO OPEN AT TOKYO'S IMPERIAL THEATRE IN MARCH 2023.

SPY X FAMILY

2019-present

In a pseudo cold war setting, master spy Loid Forger must build a cover family to get close to the son of a high-ranking political target and stop the breakout of war. While the premise sounds serious, Tatsuya Endo's *Spy x Family* is a hilarious series about a found family trying desperately to keep secrets from one another: Loid, his identity as a spy; his wife, Yor, her identity as an assassin; and their daughter, Anya, her telepathic abilities.

"Endo's artwork is clean and appealing," Morgana Santilli noted in a review for The Beat: The Blog of Comics Culture, adding that "*Spy x Family* does an excellent job of balancing fun espionage action with heartwarming family moments."

CHAPTER

Nº 3

MANGA AND ANIME BOOM

WHAT'S NEXT?

A slew of mainstream series and films are on the way.

ONE PIECE CONTINUES TO BE A TITAN IN THE ANIME INDUSTRY, DESPITE COMPETITION FROM NEWER SERIES.

> “WE WANT TO CONTINUE GROWING OUR MEMBERS' DISCOVERY AND LOVE FOR ANIME.”
>
> Kohei Obara, Netflix's Anime Creative Director, to *Variety*

ACCORDING TO DATA COLLECTED by Parrot Analytics in 2020, anime represents a huge market share of global entertainment demand. In a survey comparing the most popular genres of media, anime was the third highest requested genre, with 4.74% of the vote, right behind sitcoms (6.87%) and crime dramas (9.05%). While anime isn't exactly a genre, it's clear that the medium is in demand. Even with that demand, however, 3.2% of shows globally fall into the “anime” umbrella, meaning audiences are hungry for more anime content.

Other data points to both the high demand for anime and fast growth for the medium. Parrot Analytics reported that between 2020 and 2022, global demand for anime content grew 118%.

“It's definitely more mainstream,” said Michael Dempsey, an animation expert and general partner at Compound, a seed-stage venture fund. “It's not as contained toward niches as it used to be. I think that's probably because there's just a broader, continual hunger for animated content.”

Expert opinion is one thing, but the sheer amount of money being invested into anime is another indication of its mainstream success. In 2021, Sony acquired the anime streaming platform Crunchyroll from AT&T for a whopping $1.2 billion. Sony already owns Funimation, and plans to merge the two anime streaming services into one platform. “With the addition of Crunchyroll, we have an unprecedented opportunity to serve anime fans like never before...” said Tony Vinciquerra, chairman and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. “Our goal is to create a unified anime subscription experience as soon as possible.”

In 2022, Sony began doing just that. In March, the company started migrating all anime content from Funimation, Wakanim and VRV into Crunchyroll, effectively making Crunchyroll the biggest anime streaming service available.

The biggest challenge for Crunchyroll, and anime streaming platforms generally, will be getting the rights to new hit anime. For years, Crunchyroll, Netflix, Hulu and other platforms have all rushed to buy streaming rights for the latest anime sensations. This bidding process is expensive, with Anime

THE DUFFER BROTHERS, AT WORK ON A LIVE-ACTION *DEATH NOTE* PROJECT, HAVE SAID ANIME IS EVEN PART OF *STRANGER THINGS'* DNA.

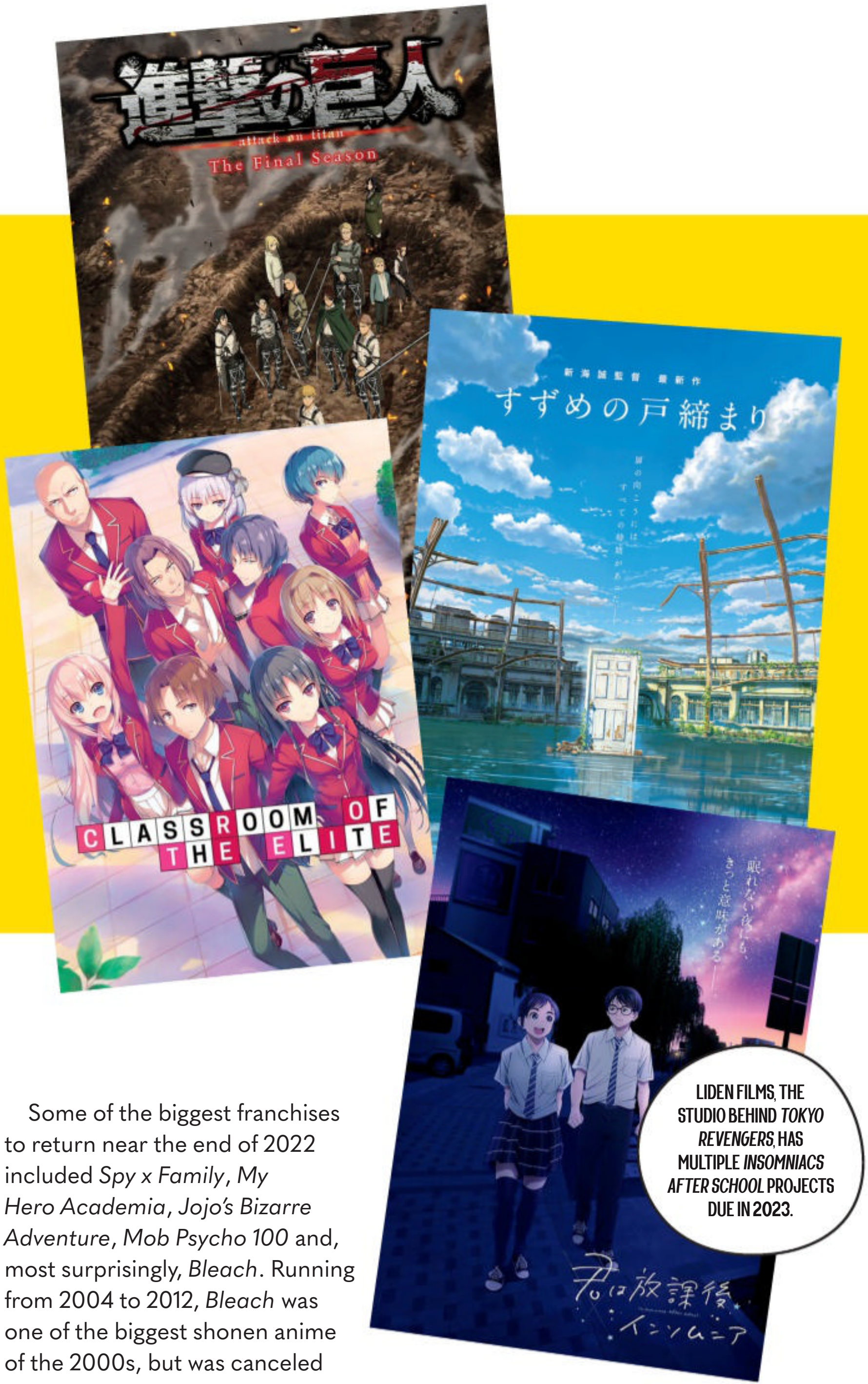
News Network's Christopher Macdonald reporting that for the most popular, most in-demand new anime, a single episode can often cost as much as $250,000 to acquire its exclusive streaming rights. For large companies such as Netflix, $250,000 an episode can be a worthwhile investment to draw in potential subscribers, as seen with their rights to hit anime series such as *Violet Evergarden* and *The Seven Deadly Sins*. In a 2022 interview with *Variety*, Kohei Obara, director of anime creative at Netflix, said that not only has interest in anime grown worldwide, but more than 50% of Netflix subscribers watched at least one anime series in 2021. Looking at this clear upward trend, the large investment into anime from major streaming platforms starts to make a lot of sense.

Outside of investment, the anime format itself has gained a level of respect and notoriety that's clear to see, even among Hollywood talent. In 2021, Nickelodeon announced the brand-new Avatar Studios, which is focused on creating new animated content in the world of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra*, helmed by the series' original creators, Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko. "*Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *Korra* have grown at least tenfold in popularity since their original hit runs on Nickelodeon," said Brian Robbins, president of ViacomCBS Kids & Family, in an interview with *Variety*. "[We're] incredibly excited to have Mike and Bryan's genius talent on board to helm a studio devoted to expanding their characters and world into new content and formats for fans everywhere."

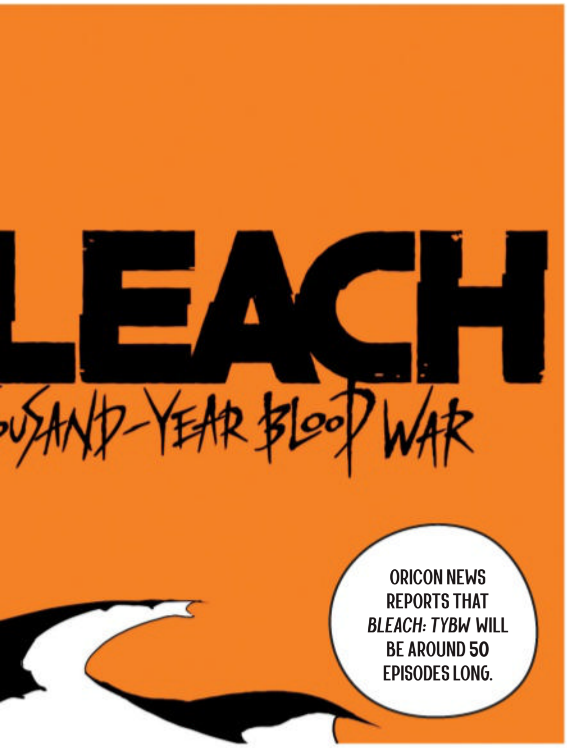
But it's not just animation studios contributing to the anime industry. In 2022, the Duffer Brothers, creators and showrunners of the hit series *Stranger Things*, launched a new production company called Upside Down Pictures. Deadline writer Mike Fleming Jr. reports that Upside Down Pictures is planning a variety of shows, including a live-action adaptation of the hit anime franchise *Death Note*. That project is just one in a long list of anime live-action adaptations planned by Western studios, including Netflix's long-anticipated live-action adaptation of the top-selling series *One Piece*.

The Japanese anime industry was severely hampered by COVID-19 shutdowns, which delayed the productions of many anime series. Today, however, there is a bevy of new and returning offerings to look forward to.

22nd ANNUAL
CRITICS' CHOICE
FAN ART FROM tumblr.


進撃の巨人
attack on titan
The Final Season
新海誠監督 最新作
すずめの戸締まり
CLASSROOM OF THE ELITE
眠れない夜にも、
きっと意味がある。
君は放課後インソムニア

LIDEN FILMS, THE STUDIO BEHIND *TOKYO REVENGERS*, HAS MULTIPLE *INSOMNIACS AFTER SCHOOL* PROJECTS DUE IN 2023.


LEACH
USAND-YEAR BLOOD WAR

ORICON NEWS REPORTS THAT *BLEACH: TYBW* WILL BE AROUND 50 EPISODES LONG.

Some of the biggest franchises to return near the end of 2022 included *Spy x Family*, *My Hero Academia*, *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*, *Mob Psycho 100* and, most surprisingly, *Bleach*. Running from 2004 to 2012, *Bleach* was one of the biggest shonen anime of the 2000s, but was canceled before it could conclude its story. *Bleach: Thousand-Year Blood War* is airing into 2023, and will cover the last arc of the manga and conclude the classic series. Later in 2023, the breakout shonen hit *Jujutsu Kaisen* is slated to premiere its second anime season. Another titan of the industry, *Attack on Titan*, is scheduled to launch its final season this year, finally concluding its industry-changing, decades-long production.

The year 2023 also promises tons of brand-new anime series and theatrical films. One highly anticipated title being released in the U.S. in April is *Suzume*, the next anime film by industry star Makoto Shinkai.

With the anime industry growing in all directions, it's clear that whatever the next breakout series is, anime as a whole has become mainstream, and it will be a steadfast staple of entertainment around the globe for years to come.

DVD
買います
DVD 買います 買取り
まっくす
現金買取
高額査定
フィギュア買います
HOBBY PARADISE
ボークス秋葉原ホビー天国
NieR:Automata
6F エアコン・季節
5F 冷蔵庫・洗濯機
4F 調理
本店 総合家電 LAOX

MANGA SALES ONLY MAKE UP A SMALL PORTION OF THE INDUSTRY'S TOTAL PROFITS.

12.14
ON SALE
ZAWSZE IN LOVE
TAKARADA
第1期、2期、OADの全36話を収録！
Blu-ray Disc BOX
12.1
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Flagship Store
免税
オノデン
LOVE merci
秋葉原のパワースポット
ラブメ
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マツモトキヨシ
Matsumoto Kiyoshi
免税
Tax Free Sh

CHAPTER

Nº 4

BEYOND THE PAGE

A look at video games, conventions, merchandise and more.

THE SUCCESS OF ANIME VIDEO GAMES

Players go wild for the medium's fun franchises.

UP UNTIL THIS POINT, WE HAVE MAINLY talked about manga and anime in their most direct form: in books and on television screens. But manga and anime's influence has extended to so much more than that, like merchandise, clothing lines, slot machines and more. One of the biggest industries running hand in hand with anime is the gaming industry.

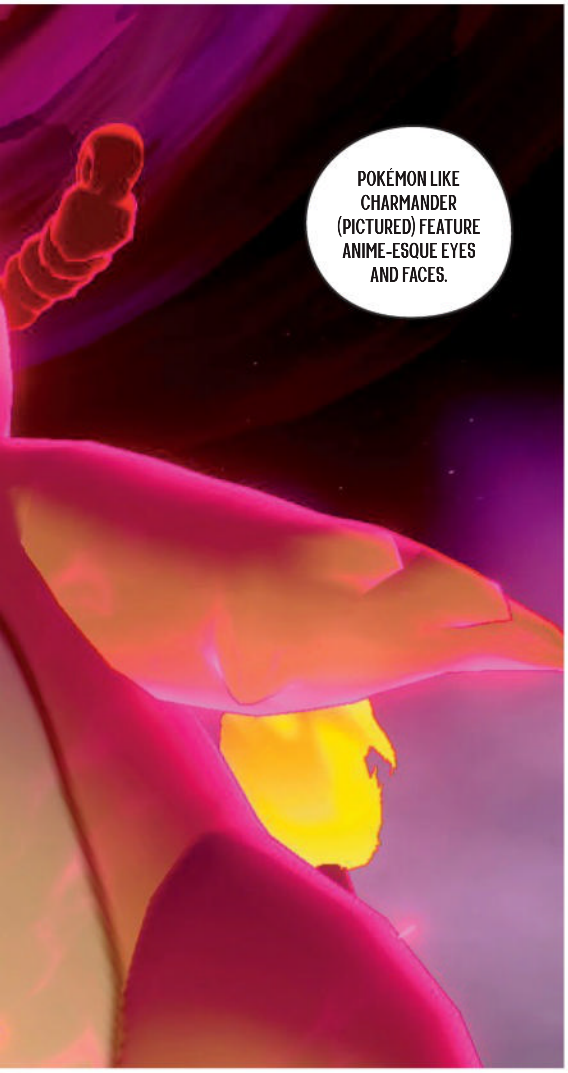
Gaming is a market behemoth when compared to anime. According to the data firm Ampere Analysis, the global games and services market raked in an estimated $188 billion last year. That's more than the anime, film and music industries combined.

The crossover between the two mediums starts to make more sense when you realize just how many big-name gaming companies are based in Japan. The list includes Sony, Nintendo, Bandai Namco, Sega and Capcom, and many of the most iconic games originate from Japan. Animation studios, having many skilled workers who can help in game development, are often hired to work on video games. Nintendo even recently announced its plans to flat-out buy an animation studio, Dynamo Pictures.

The most iconic franchise crossing the two industries is no doubt Pokémon. What began as Pokémon Red and Pokémon Blue in 1996 has turned into a multimedia juggernaut with a 25 seasons-long anime series, 23 anime movies, a top-selling card game, a live-action film and more. "The technology in making games and in making anime is really similar," said Satoshi Tajiri, the original creator of Pokémon, in a 1999 interview with *Time*. "The profession of game designer was

NINTENDO SWITCH
POKéMON SCARLET
7
www.pegi.info

GAME DATA LIBRARY REPORTS THAT IN JUST THEIR FIRST EIGHT WEEKS ON SALE IN JAPAN, POKÉMON SCARLET AND VIOLET SOLD MORE THAN SWORD AND SHIELD DID IN THEIR FIRST THREE YEARS.



POKÉMON LIKE CHARMANDER (PICTURED) FEATURE ANIME-ESQUE EYES AND FACES.

> “IT'S AN EXTRAVAGANT, OVER-THE-TOP SPECTACLE...”
>
> Laura Dale, reviewing Ultimate Ninja Storm 4 for Destructoid

NINTENDO SWITCH
Attack on Titan 2
進撃の巨人
M

DRAGON BALL FighterZ

PS4
GUNDAM VERSUS
T

PS4
P5R
PERSONA5 ROYAL
M
ATLUS

PS4
NARUTO SHIPPUDEN
STORM 4
T

created really recently. If it didn't exist, I'd probably be making anime.”

A more recent breakout hit has to be Dragon Ball FighterZ, a fighting game based on the *Dragon Ball* franchise. While *Dragon Ball* has had many game iterations in the past, none have captured the series magic (or sales numbers) that Dragon Ball FighterZ has. “Whether still or in motion, FighterZ's art looks like *Dragon Ball* at its very best, adhering closely to the standards set by the series creator, Akira Toriyama,” wrote Peter Brown in his review for GameSpot. The critically acclaimed 2018 title is still popular today, and has sold more than 8 million units.

Dragon Ball may have some of the most successful games, but it is far from the only classic anime series to dabble in the medium. *Astro Boy*, *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Attack on Titan*, *Demon Slayer*, *Gundam*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and others have all released video game adaptations of some form in the past two decades.

But some of the best anime games are totally original works that receive anime adaptations after their success in the gaming world. The biggest example is the Persona series. Made by the Japanese game company Atlus, series installments follow different groups of high schoolers who manifest “Personas” to do battle with shadowy villains. The most recent entry, Persona 5, won numerous awards, and wore its anime influence on its sleeve. “The animelike art style is complemented by full animated cutscenes that are absolutely gorgeous and help to punctuate major story events,” wrote Andrew Goldfarb in his review for IGN. Two years later, the game received a 26-episode animation adaptation aptly titled *Persona 5: The Animation*.

Whether you're a fan of anime or a huge gamer, the crossover between the two industries is undeniable. Next time you're watching your favorite anime, be sure to find out if it has a video game adaptation you could also be enjoying!

NINTENDO SWITCH
Pokémon
VIOLET

FAMOUS

Some of the most A-list people on Earth love these styles of animation.

ARIANA GRANDE

The two-time Grammy Award-winning pop icon has shown her love of anime through tattoos. In 2018, Grande got inked with a large image of Chihiro, the protagonist of Studio Ghibli's iconic anime film *Spirited Away*. Grande made a lengthy post on Instagram explaining her love for the character. "[Chihiro] matures from an easily scared girl...to a hardworking, responsible and brave young girl who has learned to put her fears aside for those she cares for."

The singer also got a tattoo of the Pokémon Eevee in 2019. Her affection for that franchise is well-documented on her social media pages.

ELON MUSK

CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, founder of The Boring Company and Twitter honcho Elon Musk is the world's wealthiest man. He is also a huge anime fan. Musk discusses his passion for the medium, his favorite series and movies, and his desires to create a real-life mecha largely on Twitter. In 2018, Musk tweeted that some of his favorite anime movies are Makoto Shinkai's *Your Name* and Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* and *Princess Mononoke*. He also tweeted that some of his top anime series include *Death Note*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, *Ghost in the Shell* and *Fullmetal Alchemist*.

MICHAEL B. JORDAN

Best known as Killmonger in Marvel's *Black Panther* and Donnie Creed in *Creed*, Michael B. Jordan is a talented actor who wears his love for anime on his sleeve, sometimes literally. In an episode of GQ's online web series *Actually Me*, Jordan shared that his favorite anime is *Naruto*. "Been a fan of [*Naruto*] for years, since I was maybe 12, 13 years old," said the actor, who also loves *Dragon Ball Z*, *Attack on Titan* and *Gundam Wing*.

But *Naruto* is clearly Jordan's favorite—he collaborated with the fashion brand Coach and the manga publishing company Viz Media to develop a *Naruto*-inspired line of clothes in 2019.

JAMIE LEE CURTIS

Hollywood veteran and horror film staple Jamie Lee Curtis turns out to be a huge fan of *One Piece*. During the 2022 Academy Awards, Curtis shared in a red carpet interview that she watches the series and hopes she is cast in Netflix's upcoming live-action adaptation. She said she is "a little old" to be cast as Nico Robin, one of the protagonists, but would love to play "that wizened old crone lady...Kureha."

BTS

The sensation BTS (or the Bangtan Boys) is the bestselling musical artist in South Korean history. Multiple members of the group have expressed their love of anime. The entire band has sung *Naruto* theme songs during karaoke sessions. Singer Kim Tae-hyung (known as V) watches anime such as *My Hero Academia* while prepping for concerts. Youngest member Jungkook loves sports anime, and has been seen watching shows such as *Haikyu!!* on his phone backstage.

JOHN BOYEGA

British actor John Boyega, best known for playing Finn in the latest *Star Wars* trilogy, is a fan of sci-fi, comics and anime. In an episode of the YouTube series *Hot Ones*, Boyega spoke on anime's appeal. "You literally watch a character grow up day by day. The way they tell stories...going into a character's subconscious mind...It's a great way of storytelling." Some of his recommendations include *Attack on Titan*, *Naruto* and *One-Punch Man*.

KEANU REEVES

Actor Keanu Reeves' love of anime goes back to his childhood, watching anime during late-night cable TV broadcasts. The Wachowskis (Lana and Lilly), directors of *The Matrix*, told him to watch anime films such as *Akira* and *Ghost in the Shell* to prepare for his leading role as Neo. Reeves is currently involved in an upcoming anime adaptation of the comic *BRZRKR*, a series by Boom! Studios.

FANS

JOHN BOYEGA
MICHAEL B. JORDAN
JAMIE LEE CURTIS
ARIANA GRANDE
KEANU REEVES
ELON MUSK
BTS

DRAWN TOGETHER

Fans flock to these real-world conventions and events to celebrate and socialize.

PASSIONATE FANS AREN'T UNIQUE TO the manga and anime industry. From *Star Wars* to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, you'll find people of all ages who deeply connect with iconic moments, characters and costumes from these series. You might think these enthusiasts only show off during Halloween or movie premieres, but that couldn't be further from the truth. The go-to destination for megafans of any franchise is a convention.

Conventions are typically two- or three-day festivals that take place inside of massive buildings or at huge outdoor spaces. Popular examples range from the Texas Monthly BBQ Fest to New York City's Affordable Art Fair. But some of the biggest conventions in the world are actually focused on manga and anime.

These gatherings are bustling with fans, authors, voice actors, publishers, journalists and more. A typical anime convention will have a wide variety of activities, including panels with industry insiders, costume (or "cosplay") contests, meet and greets with celebrities, exclusive merchandise for purchase, games to play and more.

"It's amazing concerts, world-premiere screenings before they're even shown in Japan and amazing voice actors who voice fan favorite characters," explained Peter Tatara, who is founder of the Anime NYC convention and VP of anime at LeftField Media, the organizer of the event, during an interview with NY1. "We've got over 400 exhibits where you can see and buy exclusive merchandise," he added.

Manga and anime conventions go back decades. The biggest one, Tokyo's Comiket, started in 1975 as Comic Market, and had about 700 attendees. Today, Comiket is one of the biggest conventions in the world, hitting an attendee count of 750,000 in 2019. (The event was canceled in 2020 due to COVID and changes due to the pandemic have compromised numbers somewhat since then.)

Aside from panels, interviews and sneak peeks at upcoming series, one of the most visible draws of conventions is cosplaying. Cosplaying is essentially costuming: the act of dressing up as your favorite character and showing off that costume to fans. "I love cosplaying around people who also love anime and cosplaying," said Mariah Singletary while attending Anime NYC in 2021. "I love the energy," she added. Cosplay extends far beyond convention walls, though, with many celebrities and online influencers participating in the hobby and posting photos online.

Larger conventions are also good places to see exclusive premieres of new series, or listen to behind-the-scenes talks with top creators. Anime Expo, which draws in more than 300,000 attendees a year to downtown Los Angeles, is the largest anime convention in North America. In 2022, Anime Expo hosted a special panel with producer Manabu Otsuka and writer Hiroshi Seko, best known for their work on megapopular series such as *Attack on Titan* and *Jujutsu Kaisen*.

"I feel the popularity of anime is growing, and also the popularity of going to conventions or music festivals or shows is growing," said Raymond Chiang, CEO of the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation (SPJA), which runs Anime Expo, in an interview with Anime News Network. "People come to [our convention] for a good time and a positive experience, and that's what we strive to continue to do as an organization."

This sentiment of creating a safe and positive communal space in which everyone can celebrate is at the core of nearly every convention. "Our goal has always been to make a community for fans and a platform for publishers," said Tatara, in an interview with *Publishers Weekly*. And he hopes his event, which welcomed roughly 55,000 fans in 2022, continues to grow. "In a few years we could be [at] over 100,000 attendees," he said of one of his goals.

SHONEN PROTAGONISTS SUCH AS NATSU DRAGNEEL (LEFT) ARE POPULAR TO COSPLAY.

TKBORN IN TOYONAKA, OSAKA PREFECTURE IN 1928, TEZUKA GREW UP THE OLDEST

MANY COSPLAYERS CREATE THEIR OWN COSTUMES, RANGING FROM SIMPLE TO EXTRAVAGANT.

IT'S COMMON FOR ATTENDEES TO ARRIVE IN GROUPS, OFTEN COSTUMING TOGETHER.

BE OUR GUEST!

Top turnstile attendee counts

COMIKET, TOKYO (2019)	**750,000**
ANIME EXPO, LA (2019)	**350,000**
JAPAN EXPO, PARIS (2019)	**250,000**
MANGA BARCELONA, SPAIN (2022)	**163,000**
ANIME JAPAN, TOKYO (2019)	**146,000**
ANIME MATSURI, HOUSTON (2022)	**73,000**
COMIC FIESTA, KUALA LUMPUR (2019)	**65,000**
MONTREAL COMICCON, CANADA (2022)	**62,000**
ANIME NYC, NEW YORK CITY (2022)	**55,000**
POLYMANGA, SWITZERLAND (2022)	**50,300**
CRUNCHYROLL EXPO, SAN JOSE (2022)	**45,000**
OTAKON, WASHINGTON, D.C. (2022)	**40,000**
A-KON, FORT WORTH (2018)	**34,600**
ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA (2022)	**32,000**
SAKURA-CON, SEATTLE (2022)	**25,000**

MERCH FOR THE MASSES

Celebrate your animation obsession with clothes, figurines, accessories, dishware and more.

MERCHANDISE MAKES UP 29% OF REVENUE for the global anime market, according to data collected by the market research company Grand View Research. That makes merchandise the highest grossing revenue stream for anime as a whole, by a wide margin. With such a large variety of fun products for nearly every popular series out there, it makes sense that fans would want to find something to show off their passion.

WHERE TO BUY

These top online retailers are great resources that can hook you up with all things manga and anime.

AmiAmi
The Japanese-based e-commerce store sells everything from key chains to curtains. While the overseas shipping costs may be higher, it's a solid go-to for reasonably priced collectibles, especially figures and figurines. (amiami.com)

Crunchyroll
The retail arm of the streaming service offers a robust selection of merchandise. Search by character or product to find your favorite figures, plushies, shirts and more, including exclusive collaborations. (store.crunchyroll.com)

Hot Topic
The web version of the original mall-based retailer has plenty of cool merch to check out, with a huge selection of designs and styles, including T-shirts, backpacks, jewelry—even a *Dragon Ball* ramen bowl. (hottopic.com)

1

9

DEMON SLAYER
MUGEN TRAIN
13

1 *Haikyu!!* Shoyo Hinata Figure, $40, Crunchyroll **2** *Demon Slayer* Earring Key Chain, $9, Hot Topic **3** *My Hero Academia* Chibi Mini Backpack, $45, Hot Topic **4** *Attack on Titan* Chibi Eren Pin, $9, Hot Topic **5** *Tokyo Revengers* Manjiro Sano Otaku Lamp, $35, Hot Topic **6** *My Neighbor Totoro* Sketchbook, $20, Amazon.com **7** Pokémon Eevee Tassel Beanie, $25, Hot Topic **8** *Attack on Titan* Ramen Bowl and Chopsticks, $20, Hot Topic **9** *Berserk* Final Slash Long Sleeve Tee, $42, Atsuko .com **10** *Fruits Basket* Funko, Shigure Soma With Dog, $15, Crunchyroll **11** Bandai Hobby Strike Gundam Model Kit, $54, Amazon.com **12** *Dragon Ball Z* Goku Plush Toy, $25, Amazon. com **13** *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train* Arc Blu-Ray, $22.50, Crunchyroll **14** *Spy x Family* Anya Forger Nendoroid Figure, $42, AmiAmi **15** *My Hero Academia* Joggers, $72, Atsuko.com **16** *Naruto* Mug, $20, Walmart.com

MUG + COASTER
GIFT SET
NARUTO
SHIPPUDEN
16

CHAPTER

Nº 4

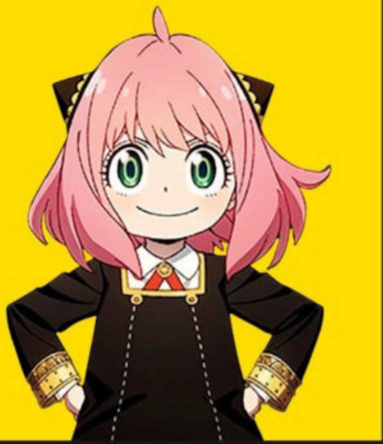
BEYOND
THE PAGE

ANIME CHARACTERS A TO Z

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THESE ICONIC FAN-FAVORITES? PUT YOUR SKILLS TO THE TEST!

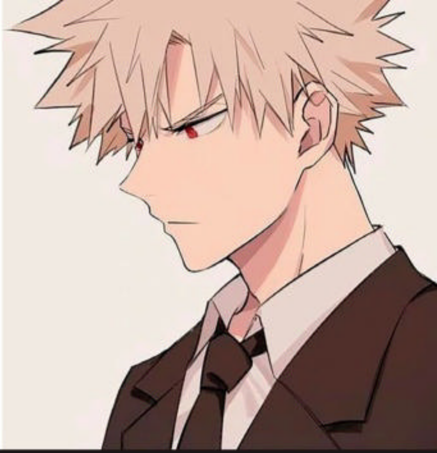
A

This 6-year-old telepath was adopted by a master spy and a kindhearted assassin in the hit series *Spy x Family*.



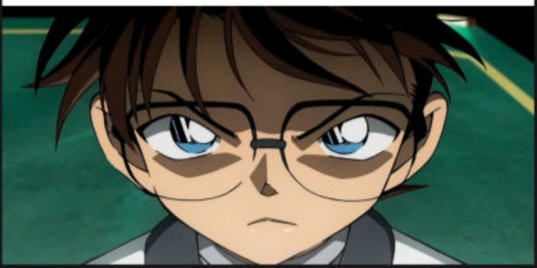
B

A student of Class 1-A and childhood frenemy of Midoriya Izuku, the *My Hero Academia* protagonist is known for his explosive powers and temper.



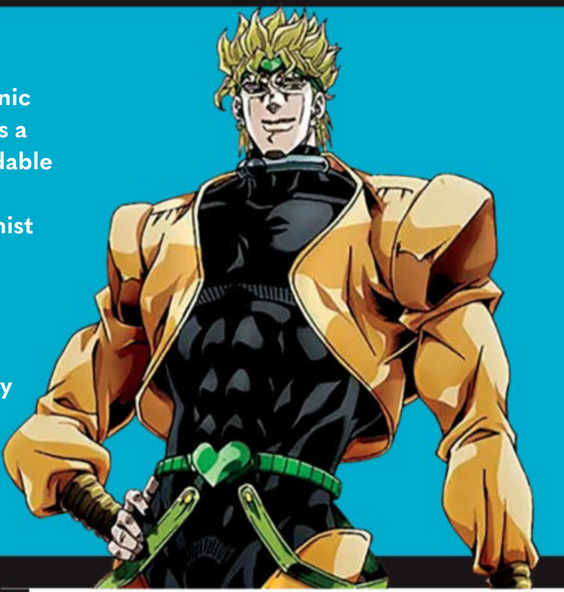
C

This brilliant teenage detective was exposed to a prototype poison that caused him to de-age! Despite his small stature, he is still a genius at solving mysteries, and is the star of the long-running series *Case Closed*.



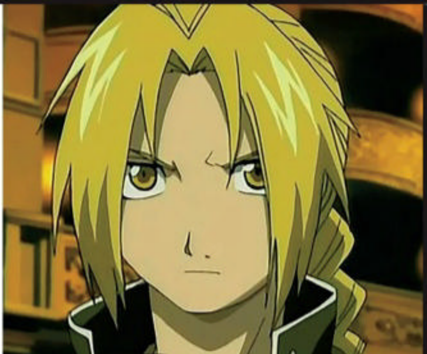
D

One of the most iconic villains in anime, he's a powerful and formidable figure and the overarching antagonist of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. He is relentlessly power-hungry, endlessly ambitious, extremely manipulative and controls the powerful Stand "The World."



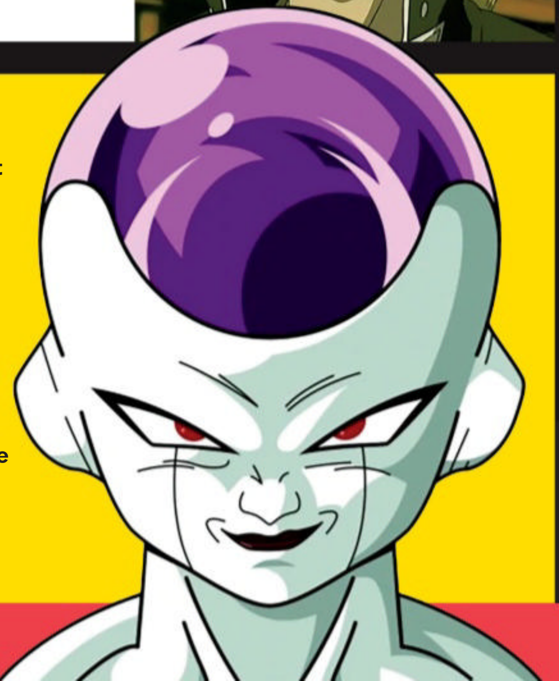
E

Alongside his younger brother, this brave teen tried to bring his mother back to life using alchemy. Now known as the titular Fullmetal Alchemist, he seeks a way to get his brother's soul back to its body.



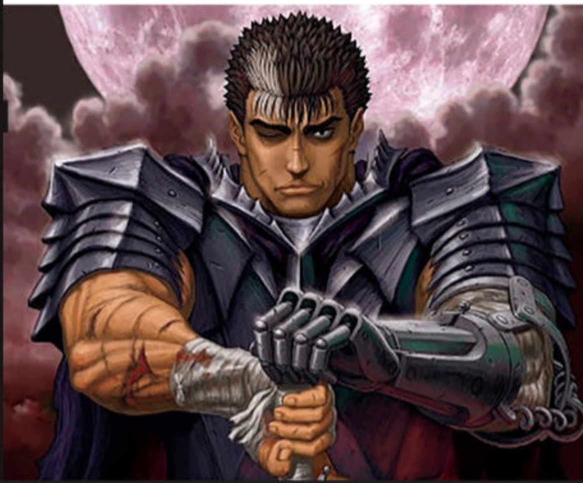
F

Arguably the most memorable villain in the *Dragon Ball* franchise, this ruthless *Dragon Ball Z* tyrant rules over an intergalactic army, and is responsible for the almost complete destruction of the Saiyan race.

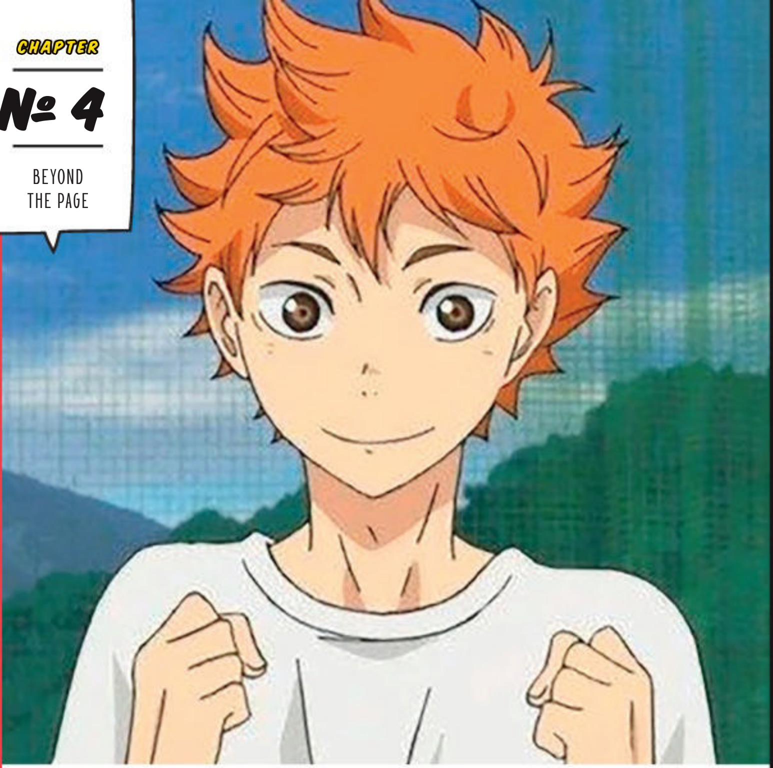


G

Known as the "Black Swordsman," this warrior wields a massive sword and the Berserker armor to fight men and monsters alike in *Berserk's* bleak world ruled by demons. He seeks revenge against his former ally Griffith.

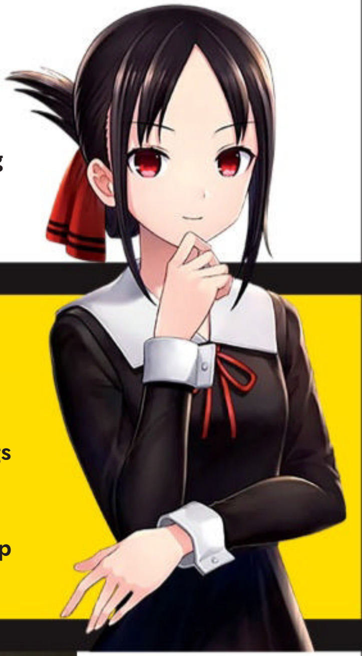


ANSWERS **A** Anya Forger; **B** Bakugo Katsuki; **C** Conan Edogawa; **D** Dio Brando; **E** Edward (and Alphonse) Elric; **F** Frieza; **G** Guts



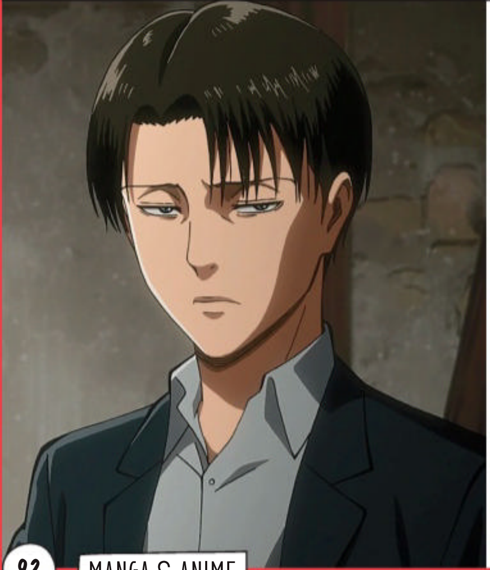
H

The cheerful protagonist of the series *Haikyu!!*, this high schooler plays for the Karasuno High volleyball club. His lightning fast speed and endless stamina make him a fearsome opponent.



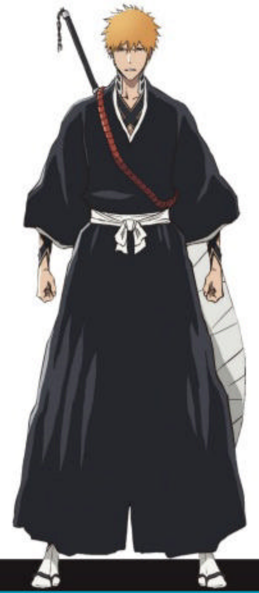
K

The titular lead of the romantic comedy series *Kaguya-Sama: Love Is War*, she harbors feelings for fellow student council member Miyuki Shirogane, but only wants to be in a relationship if he confesses his feelings first.



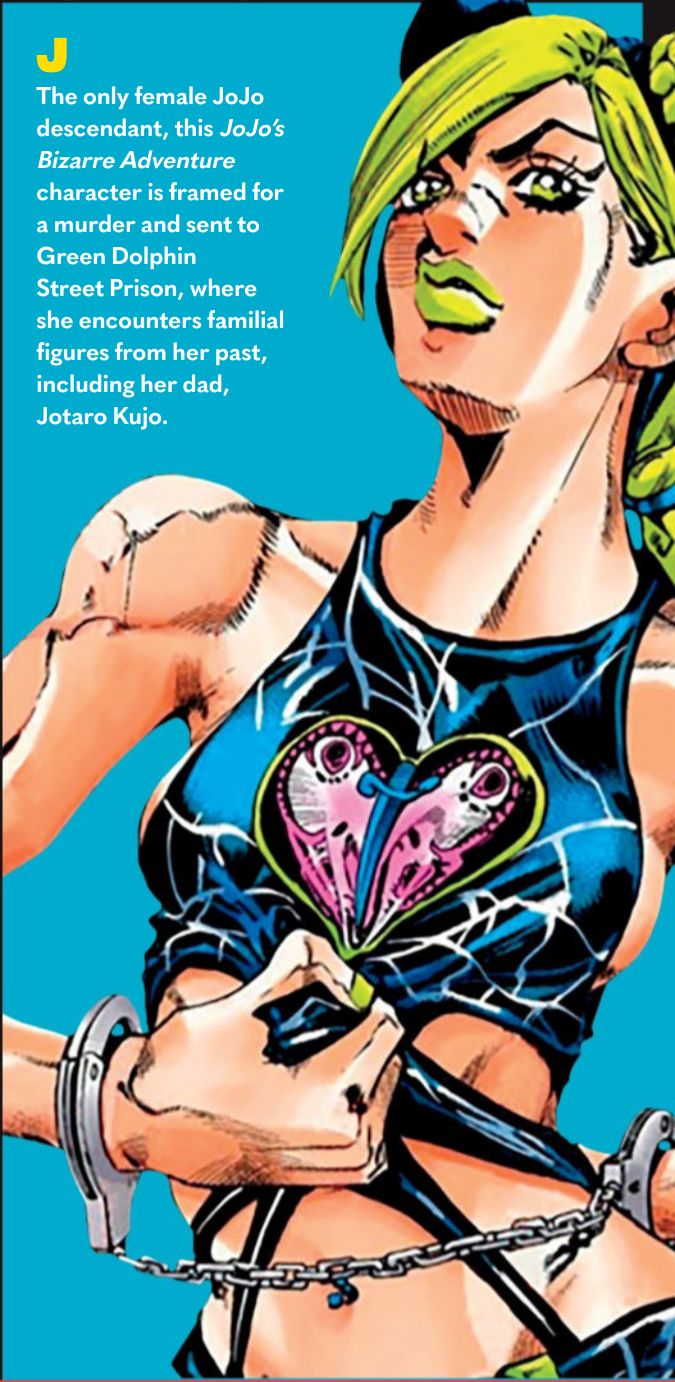
L

In *Attack on Titan*, he's widely considered humanity's strongest soldier in the fight against the man-eating humanoids. A captain of the Survey Corps, he and Erwin Smith act as de facto leaders during times of conflict.



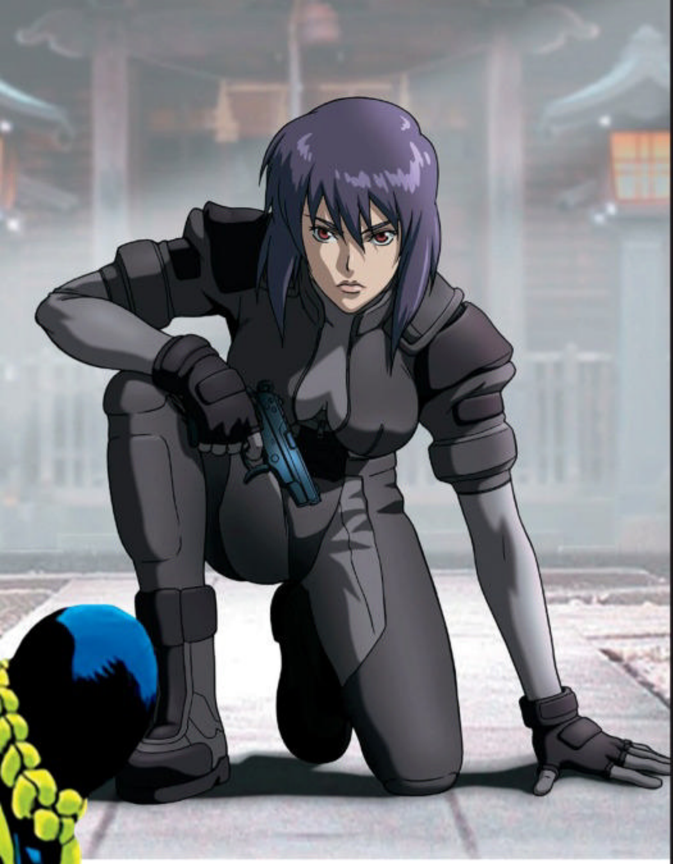
I

Often grouped together with shonen protagonists such as Naruto and Luffy in *Bleach*, this teen can see spirits. After an encounter with a supernatural creature, he becomes a Soul Reaper.



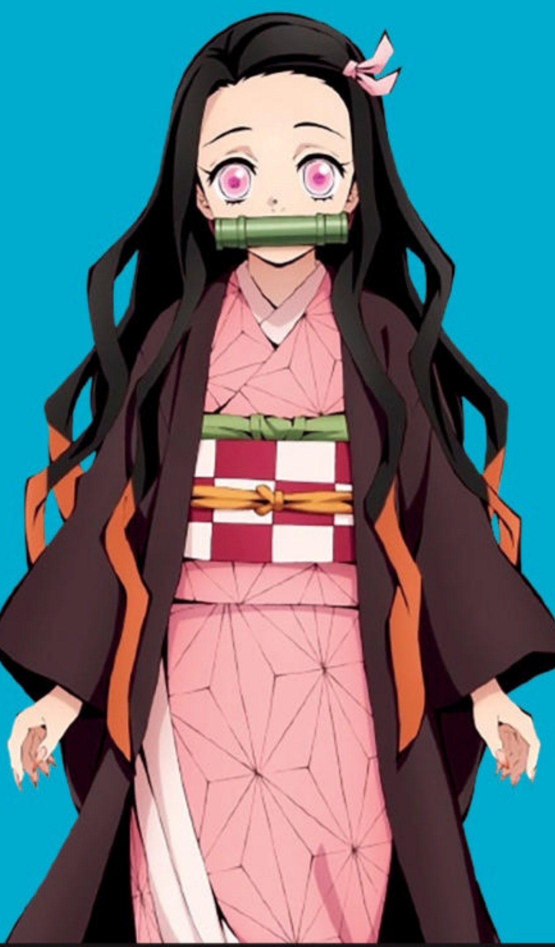
J

The only female JoJo descendant, this *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* character is framed for a murder and sent to Green Dolphin Street Prison, where she encounters familial figures from her past, including her dad, Jotaro Kujo.



M

The protagonist of the iconic 1995 film *Ghost in the Shell* has a fully cybernetic body and questions if her human "soul" remains intact at all, or is a "ghost" in the machine.

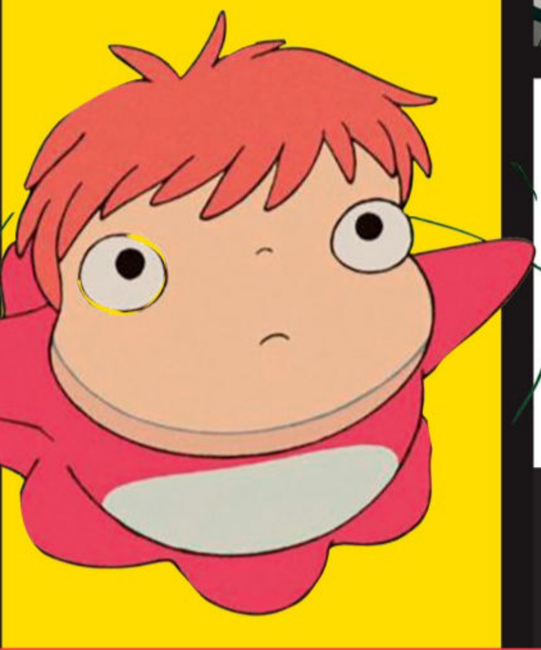


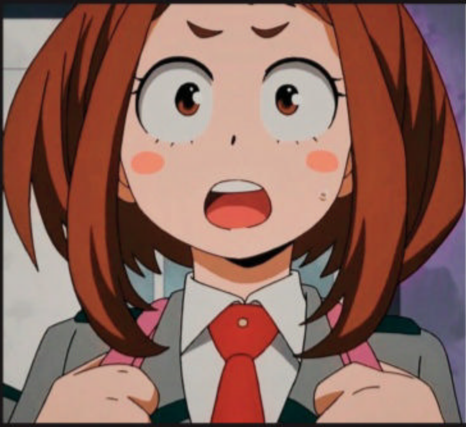
N

In *Demon Slayer*, she and her brother, Tanjiro Kamado, are the last of the Kamado family after a vicious demon attack. She journeys with her brother to find a cure to her now demonic nature.

P

This protagonist of her titular film, which is one of Studio Ghibli's most childlike works, is a fish who wishes to become a human after washing ashore.



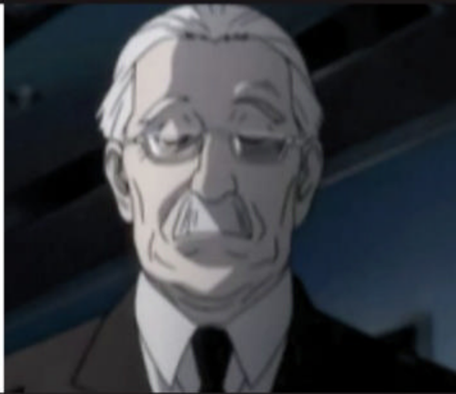


O

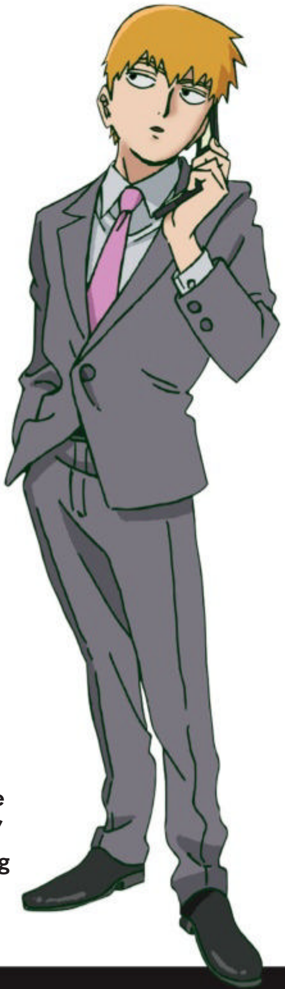
This character's hero alias is Uravity, as her superpower quirk allows her to negate gravity. She is kind, positive and empathetic, unlike some of the other students in *My Hero Academia*.

Q

Assistant and father figure to the genius detective L in *Death Note*, this humble gentleman founded an orphanage for gifted children. He works closely with the Japanese Task Force to apprehend the mass killer Kira.



ANSWERS **H** Hinata Shoyo; **I** Ichigo Kurosaki; **J** Jolyne Cujoh; **K** Kaguya Shinomiya; **L** Levi Ackerman; **M** Motoko Kusanagi; **N** Nezuko Kamado; **O** Ochako Uraraka; **P** Ponyo; **Q** Quillish "Watari" Wammy

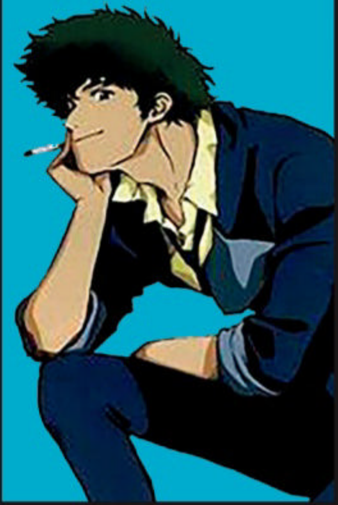


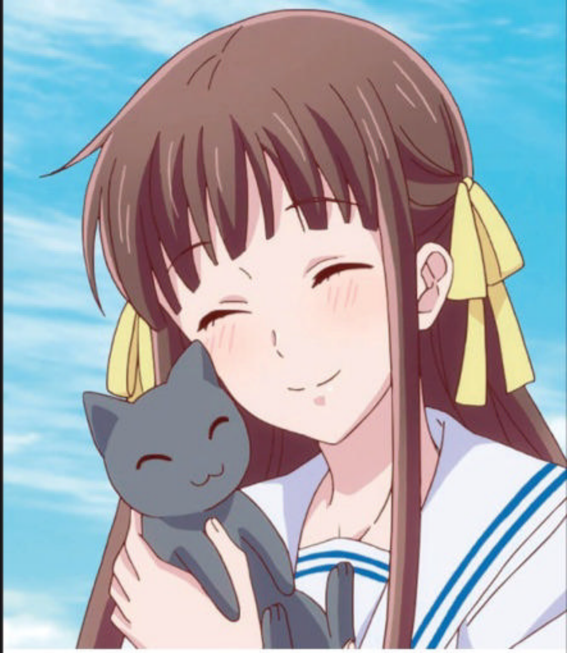
R

Mentor to the titular Mob in *Mob Psycho 100*, this lovable con artist claims to be “the greatest psychic of the 21st century,” despite having no psychic abilities.

S

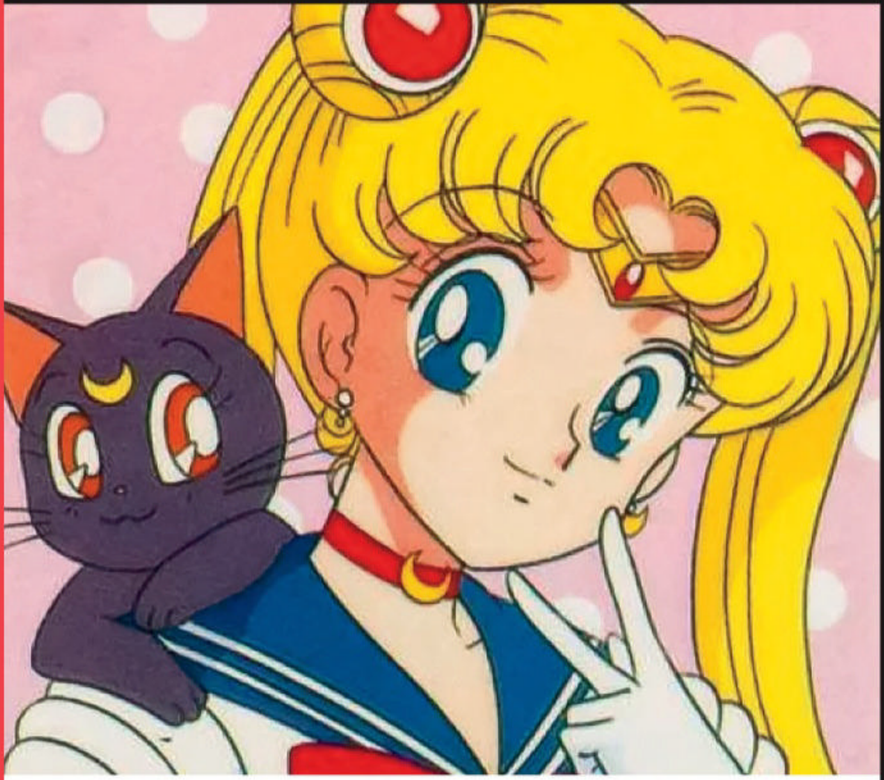
Sauve, mysterious and effortlessly cool, he’s a space cowboy clad in a blue suit who works with fellow bounty hunters Jet Black and Faye Valentine in the iconic series *Cowboy Bebop*.





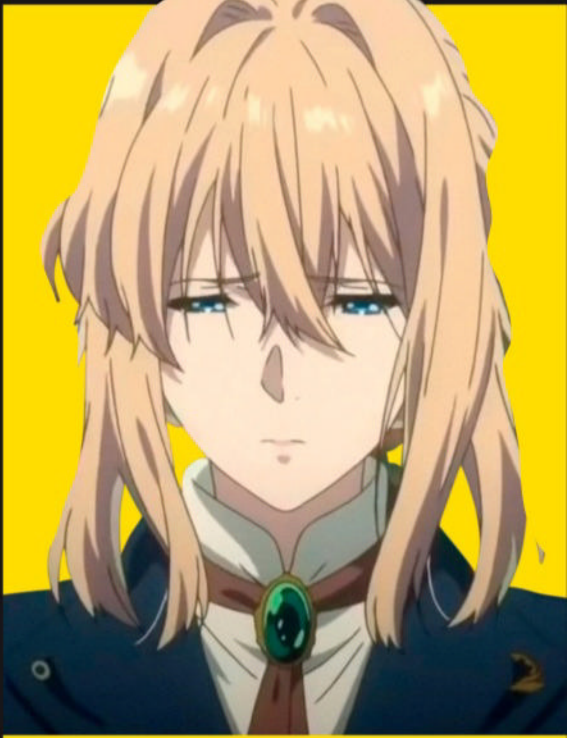
T

She’s the heroine of *Fruits Basket*, first seen living alone in a tent in the woods. She always puts others before herself, and strives to break the shape-changing curse of the Sohma family.



U

She is the Sailor Guardian of love and justice and the protagonist of *Sailor Moon*. Despite protecting the world from evildoers, she always seeks nonviolent ways to solve conflict.

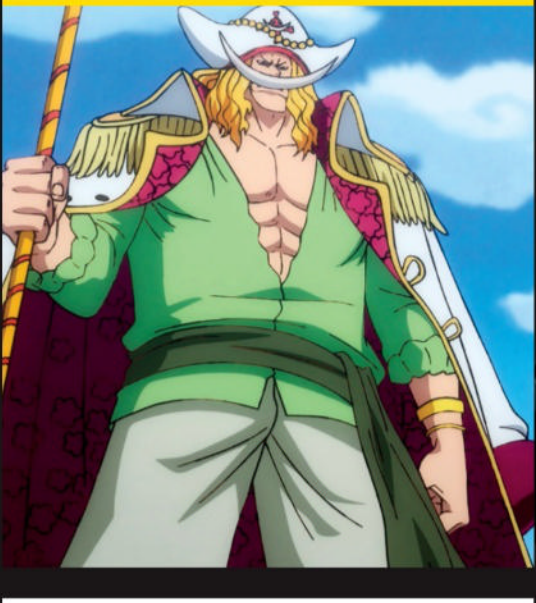


V

She is the orphaned child soldier and titular star of this drama series from Kyoto Animation. With the war over, she joins a ghostwriting company to better understand the parting words of her commanding officer: “I love you.”

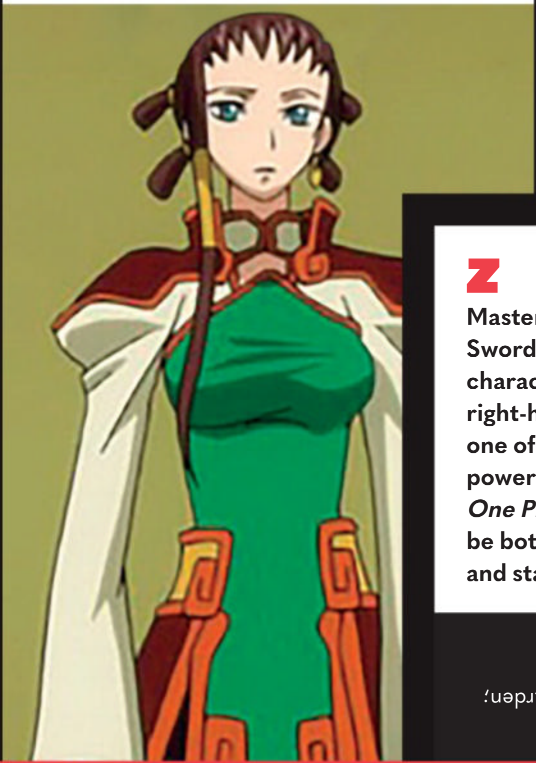
W

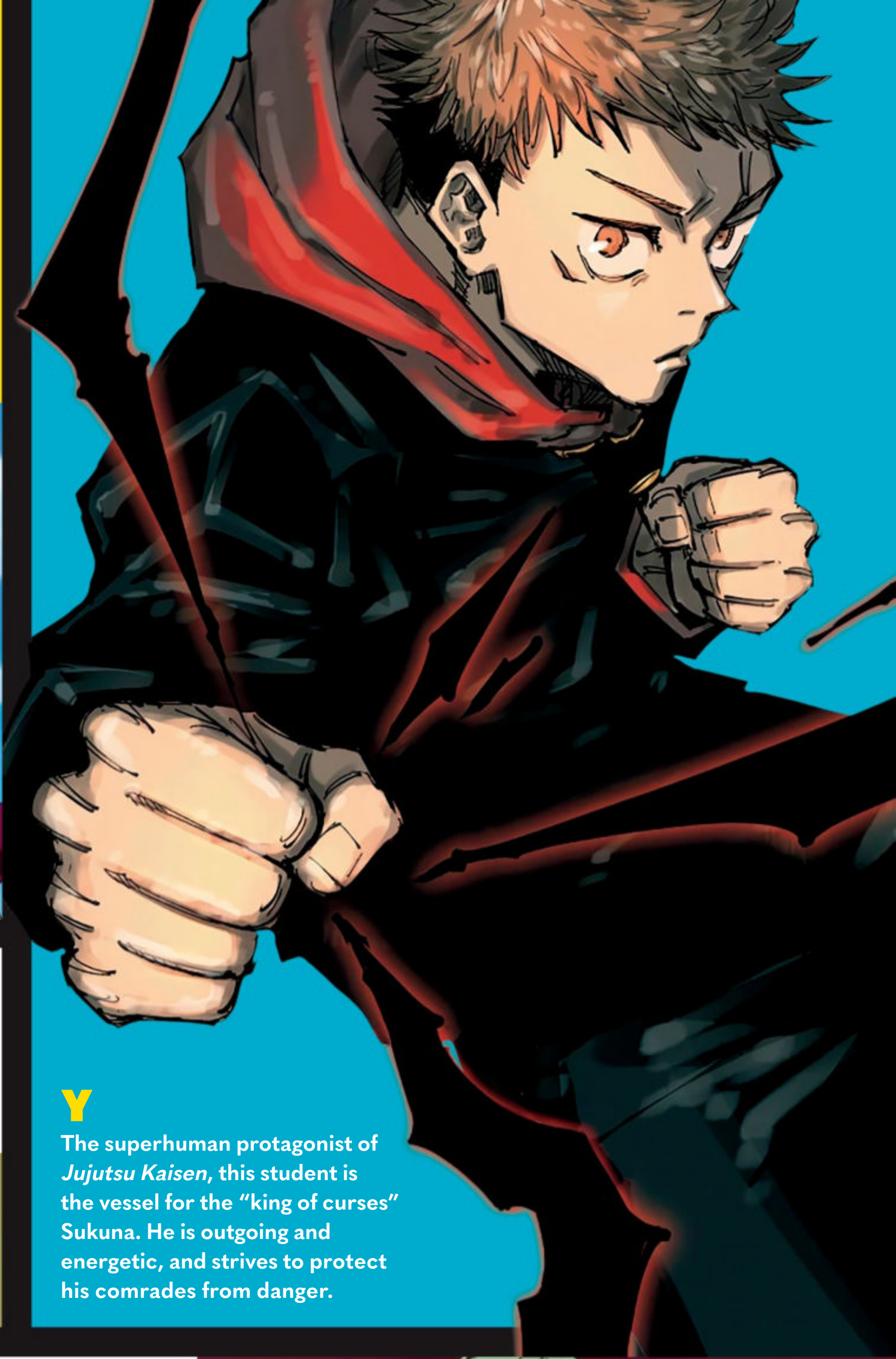
Considered the "strongest man in the world" for much of the story of *One Piece*, this internationally known pirate is a fierce ally to Luffy, despite his calling him a "brat" all the time.



X

The Chinese Federation member in *Code Geass* is a loyal and capable military officer, and an aid to Li Xingke.



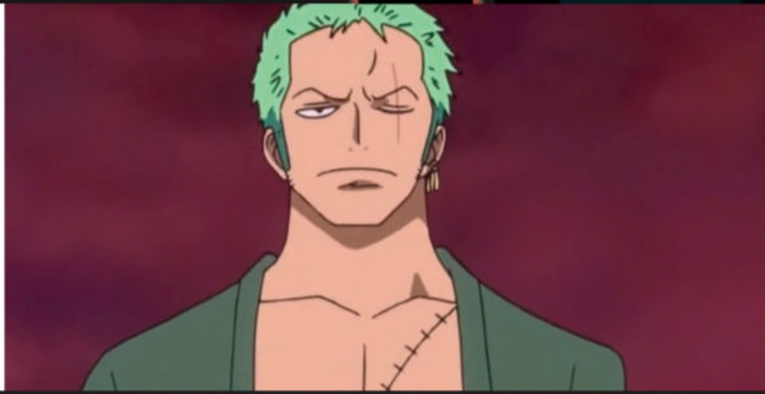


Y

The superhuman protagonist of *Jujutsu Kaisen*, this student is the vessel for the "king of curses" Sukuna. He is outgoing and energetic, and strives to protect his comrades from danger.

Z

Master of the Three Sword Style, this character is Luffy's right-hand man and one of the most powerful pirates in *One Piece*. He can be both serious and standoffish.



ANSWERS **R** Reigen Arataka; **S** Spike Spiegel; **T** Tohru Honda; **U** Usagi Tsukino; **V** Violet Evergarden; **W** Whitebeard (Edward Newgate); **X** Xiangling Zhou; **Y** Yuji Itadori; **Z** Zoro

BY THE NUM

THE BIG PICTURE

These sweeping sales figures paint an image of an industry thriving locally and internationally.

2021 JAPANESE MANGA MARKET

$5.1 billion

2021 U.S. COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVEL SALES

77% manga

2021 U.S. ANIME MARKET

$1.6 billion

2022 GLOBAL ANIME MARKET

$26.8 billion

NUMBER OF ANIMATION STUDIOS IN JAPAN

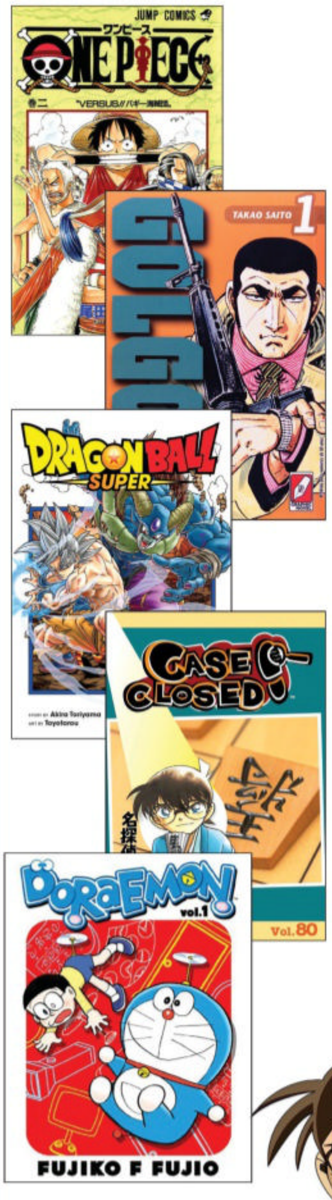
over 622

2030 GLOBAL ANIME REVENUE FORECAST

$56.4 billion

THE TOP 5 BESTSELLING MANGA SERIES OF ALL TIME

With decades-long runs, these are considered the classics within the medium.


JUMP COMICS
ONE PIECE
TAKAO SAITO
1
GOLGO
DRAGON BALL
SUPER
CASE CLOSED
Vol.80
DORAEMON
vol.1
FUJIKO F FUJIO

ONE PIECE
(1997-PRESENT)
>500 million

GOLGO 13
(1968-PRESENT)
>300 million

DRAGON BALL
(1984-1995)
>300 million

CASE CLOSED
(1994-PRESENT)
>250 million

DORAEMON
(1969-1996)
>250 million

BERS

Highlights from an industry experiencing historic success.

THE TOP 5 BESTSELLING NEW MANGA SERIES (2012-2022)

Still a newbie and looking for where to start? Try one of these current blockbusters.

DEMON SLAYER
KIMETSU NO YAIBA
1
KOYOHARU GOTOUGE
呪術廻戦
1
芥見下々
TOKYO
MY HERO ACADEMIA
HAIKYU!!
19
HARUICHI FURUDATE

DEMON SLAYER
(2016-2020)
>150 million

JUJUTSU KAISEN
(2018-PRESENT)
>70 million

TOKYO REVENGERS
(2017-PRESENT)
>65 million

MY HERO ACADEMIA
(2014-PRESENT)
>65 million

HAIKYU!!
(2012-2020)
>55 million

THE HIGHEST GROSSING ANIME MOVIES

The red-hot Studio Ghibli has made three out of the top five.

With your blade, bring an end to the nightmare.
DEMON SLAYER
MUGEN TRAIN
your name.
MIYAZAKI'S
SPIRITED AWAY
HAYAO MIYAZAKI
HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE
PONYO

DEMON SLAYER: MUGEN TRAIN
>$450 million

YOUR NAME
>$355 million

SPIRITED AWAY
>$355 million

HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE
>$235 million

PONYO
>$200 million

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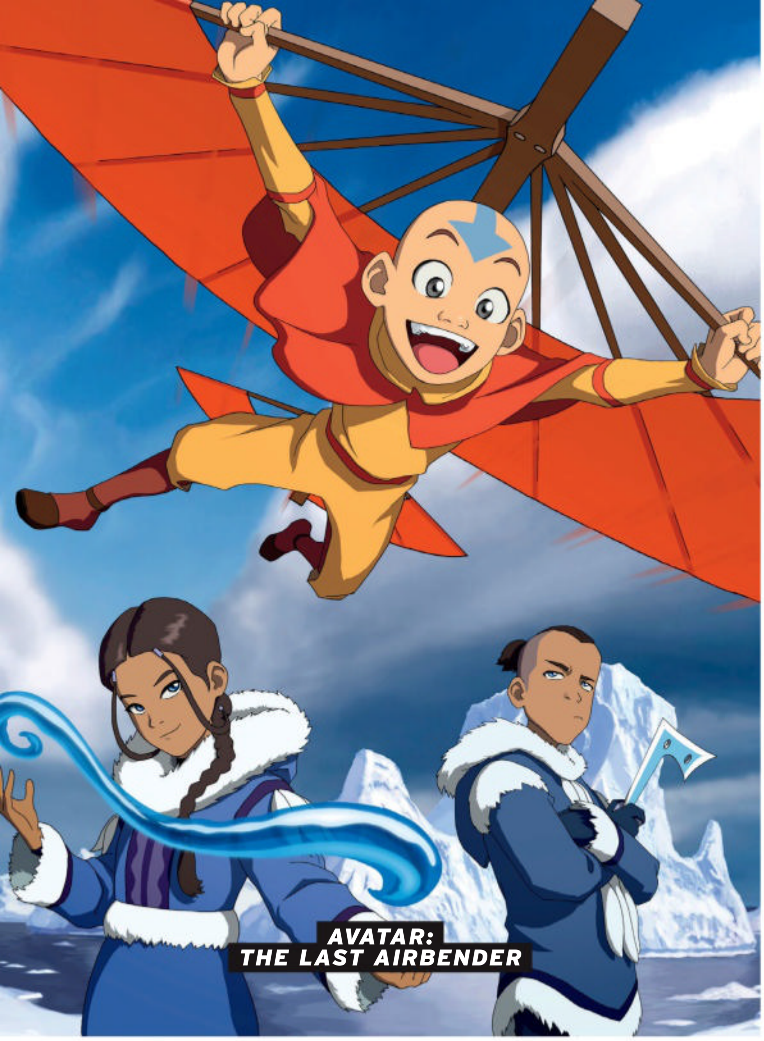
THE EASTERN ART MEDIUMS HAVE TAKEN THE U.S. BY STORM, AS EVIDENCED BY THE BOUNTY OF OPTIONS PACKED ON THESE SHELVES IN AN EDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY, BOOKSTORE.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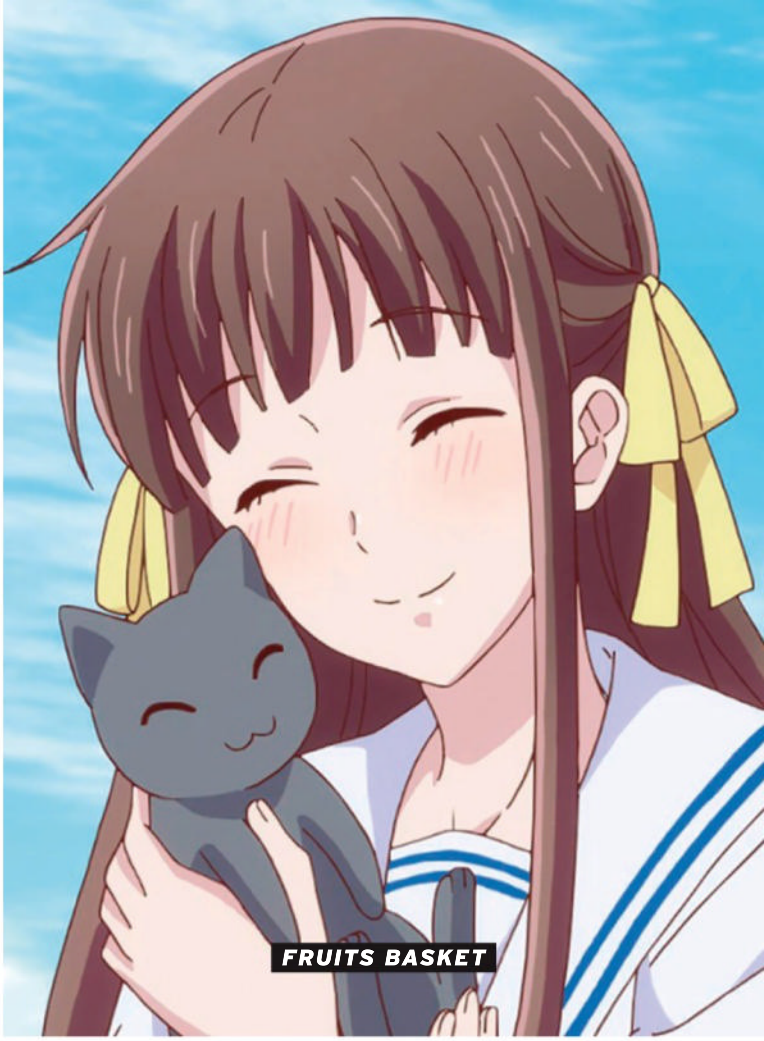
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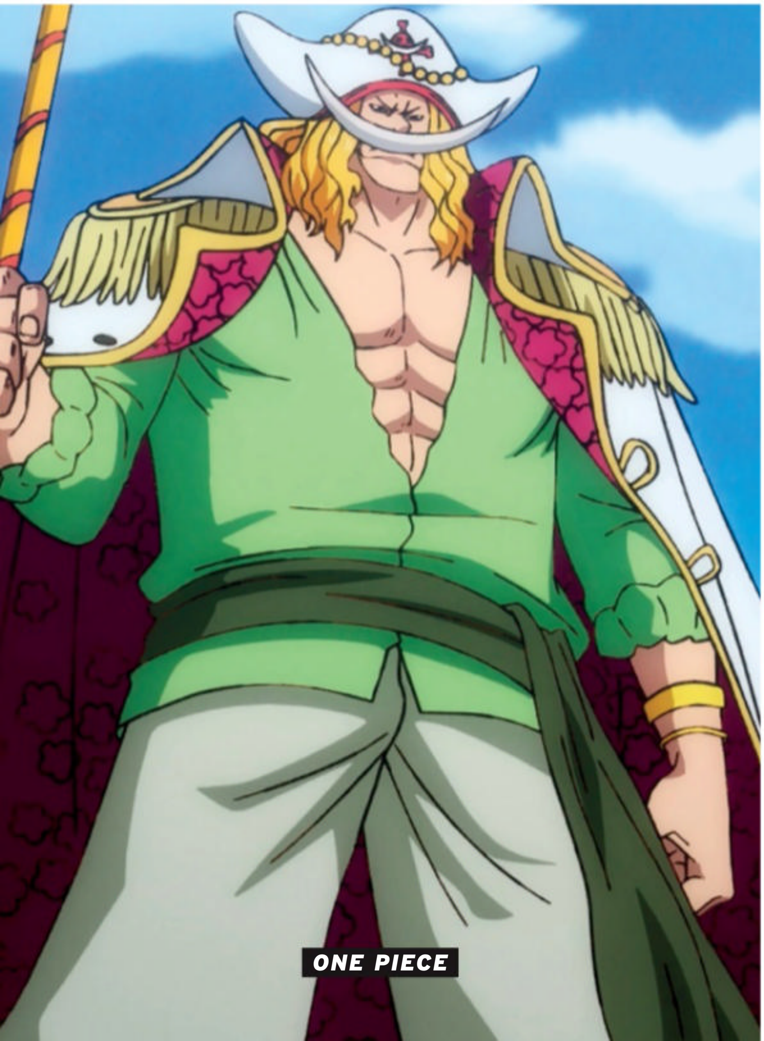
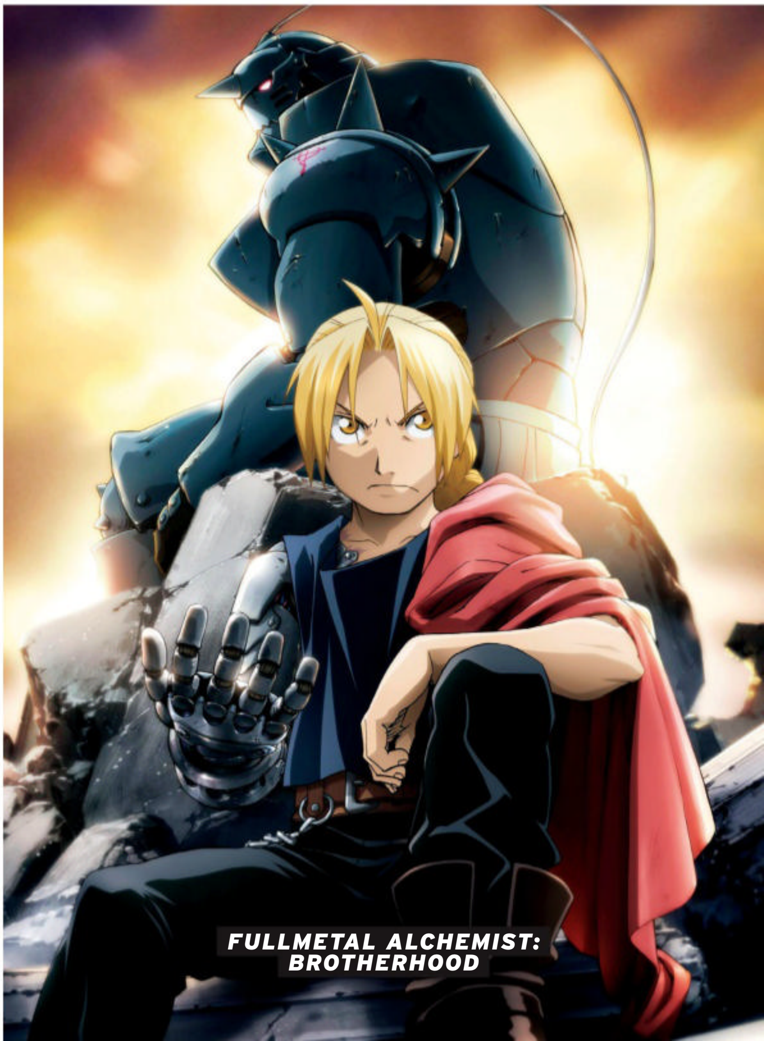

ONE PIECE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